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**GERMANY
PUTS THE
CLOCK BACK**

BY EDGAR ANSEL MOWRER

IMMORTAL ITALY
THIS AMERICAN WORLD
GERMANY PUTS THE CLOCK BACK
THE DRAGON WAKES

GERMANY PUTS THE CLOCK BACK



EDGAR ANSEL MOWRER

“When, therefore, you hear men ask if that which is called the future belongs to liberty, you must answer that liberty has something still better, the eternal.”

BENEDETTO CROCE.

REVISED EDITION

1939

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FOREWORD

ON THE EVE, 1939

A MILLION and a half Frenchmen, almost a million sons of the British Empire, nearly sixty thousand Americans died in the World War. In so far as they were conscious of any explicit motive, they fought to prevent German dominion over Europe and conceivably over other parts of the world as well. Japanese, Italians, Russians, Roumanians and Serbs may have had commercial or territorial aggrandizement as a primary object. Certain business men everywhere may have looked forward to vaster trading advantages. But the finer citizens of the democracies were primarily interested in preventing Kaiser William II from extending his harsh, histrionic rule. In part, admittedly, simply because Kaiser William was "alien." In part, too, because the big democracies were on top and intended to stay there. But fundamentally because the Germans, who were personally popular, worshipped other gods than the children of liberalism. Prussian autocracy incorporated a way of thought, a way of government, a way of life, repugnant to most Occidentals. This repugnance was basic to the British uproar over the invasion of "gallant little Belgium." It was the heart of Woodrow Wilson's demand that the world be made "safe for democracy." Behind the feeling of antipathy lay something more

substantial, namely, the pondered conviction that autocracy and aggression go hand in hand. The democracies hated war. In order to minimize the chances of future war they felt tyranny should wherever possible be swept away. Beaten Germany must, at least until it gave proof of fundamental change of heart, be disarmed and surrounded by vigilant watchmen. Meanwhile, elsewhere, through the League of Nations, the democracies should form what Woodrow Wilson called "such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free." It was never intended that the remaining (or newly formed) autocracies should be permitted to enter.

Without a shadow of a doubt, this roughly was the hope of the more intelligent Frenchmen, Britishers and Americans who gave their lives. However fantastic it seems today, it was not, in the eyes of the writer, necessarily utopian. Conceivably it could have been made to work.

Nor was the pacifist, Marxist and pro-German charge of "hypocrisy" justified. Germany's attack on the Western world in 1914 admittedly was no more iniquitous than that of former British, French or American aggression, *in the light* of a traditional ethic. But behind such new-sounding statements as Edith Cavell's "Patriotism is not enough!" lay the aspiration toward a better ethic in the name of which Germany's admitted Machiavellism was condemned by most civilized men. The subsequent desire to "outlaw war" was based on a complex perception of a crying need: the belief that modern, "totalitarian," mechanized war had ceased to embody the values past wars may

have contained. Modern warfare clearly consummated the survival of the least fit and revived passions destructive to modern life and incompatible with the maintenance of civilization. On the shrinking scale of modern Europe, such warfare postponed that close co-operation which alone could prevent the eclipse of the dominant race. Commercially, too, war was ceasing to pay. . . .

After such a terrible struggle, only the vanquished would be tempted to reopen the conflict. Since the chief vanquished Power, Germany, was in addition potentially the strongest Continental Power in Europe, it was considered proper to temper the guiding principle of "self-determination of peoples" with certain precautions so far as Germany was concerned. On the whole, German territory was respected. In the Corridor and in Upper Silesia the Germans had never been anything but an upstart minority. In Alsace the German-speaking *Allemanen* were as hostile to Germany as were their kinsmen, the German Swiss. But the hesitating Austrians were forcibly prevented from joining Germany proper; and the half-Slav Sudeten Germans of Bohemia and Moravia were embodied with the Czechs and Slovaks in the new Czechoslovak Republic.

This last decision was not taken because Czechs were considered superior to Germans or any more likely to become good liberals. To be sure, the dominant Czechs were fundamentally democratic, unlike their Slovak cousins. But that was not the reason for their preference by the makers of the 1919 peace treaties. It was simply because the Czechs, as the obvious victims of a conceivable German resurgence,

could presumably be counted on to remain on the side of the Western democracies. Their strength would help eliminate the only serious danger to the future freedom of the victors, which was Germany. For the men of 1919 saw clearly what their successors immediately began to forget, namely, that in a world so diminished in size as ours, there was no longer place for two systems, the one pacific though supreme, the other disciplined by tyranny, militaristic by nature, embittered by defeat.

Yet if Germany could only be kept down for a while, it might, the victors hoped, come to embrace freedom and renounce territorial expansion on a continent where expansion by anyone was bound to hurt everyone. Short of such German change of heart, there was no alternative but the wholesale dismemberment of Germany. The memory of German ruthlessness, both in the field and at the council table, was still much alive. Germany did not get off scot free, but neither was it permanently crippled. At most, one might say the Germans were temporarily hobbled.

But there was no more essential reason why German independence should necessarily mean the absorption of German-speaking Sudetens, Austrians or Alsatians than that France should set up a howl for the million inhabitants of *la Suisse romande* or the habitants of Canada. As the Germans came to play again an important rôle in the comity of nations, they would, it was hoped, have better things than revenge to think about. Meanwhile this comity should accustom itself to the new collective system that would short-circuit aggression once and for all.

Where the victorious nations failed was not pri-

marily in the terms of the treaties themselves, which created a far juster world than they had found or than the Germans if victorious would have made. They failed in their attempt to found and establish a workable collective system which was the only conceivable alternative to permanent power politics. Had the victors remained united, vigilant and zealous partisans of an effective organization, the Germans, frustrated of any hope of revenge, might in time have come to see the benefits of a united, democratic and liberally controlled world organized not so much to perpetuate as to dwarf national sovereignty and international frontiers.

One may question if the leaders in 1919 had sufficiently realized the need for economic co-operation or were ready for the pooling of resources necessary to their desire to forestall future aggression. One may doubt if they could have brought still unimaginative peoples to concur in any such "sacrifices" if they had tried. The fact remains, they did not try; and "proletarian" nations had therefore no choice but between accepting relative inferiority or rebelling against the *status quo*. At the worst, one had every reason to believe that the victors would at least preserve pride and courage enough to maintain their superiority by force. For however one-sided the order resulting from the "Versailles system" until it was reinforced and supplanted by the collective system, its collapse could leave nothing but anarchy. But here again the victors failed. They remained neither vigilant and honest partisans of the collective system, nor strong and meticulous guardians of the peace treaties. Never was

there such a spectacle of short-sighted egoism and spiritual dismay.

The United States, largely for reasons of internal politics, refused the treaties their statesmen had helped to make, spurned the League and went home in a huff. The moral quality prevailing in the country slumped steadily from the Wilsonian level; by 1927 it seemed as though the country was half in the hands of gangs and racketeers who robbed, blackmailed, kidnapped and murdered with virtual impunity. Had such a condition persisted, the United States could hardly have escaped destruction. Isolationism flourished on prosperity, prejudice and self-righteousness. Business ideals were supreme. The nation's successful military intervention in Europe in 1917 came gradually to be considered a colossal mistake; Germany's efforts to cast off the treaty and again dominate Europe were almost openly encouraged; co-operation with the late "associates" was haughtily refused. For the Americans in their innocence had somehow imagined that democracy could be "saved" forever by a single effort . . . about as intelligent a notion as expecting to preserve one's lungs by a single mountain vacation or one's teeth by one lone visit to the dentist.

The British, true to their tradition of unimaginative self-interest, set about curbing France and encouraging Germany before the ink on the Versailles Treaty was dry. The French, after the American withdrawal and the British apostasy, chose to stick to the original settlement with the help of four or five small beneficiary States. Riding a very high horse indeed, they soon quarrelled with the pro-German British,

while joining them in fleecing the American creditor; they indulged in a number of emotionally justified but politically inconsiderate acts against still prostrate Germany; ended by offending or neglecting nearly all of their small allies; overtrumped the British in the degree of their betrayal of the League of Nations principles; failed to crack down on the impoverished and impotent-appearing Germans until suddenly challenged by Adolf Hitler in one after another of a series of deliberate provocations. Dismayed, doubting, hamstrung by a truly Tolstoian pacifism based on the subtlest of mendacious propagandas, they expended their energy in fierce internal dissension and the ferociously individual and selfish enjoyment of their apparently inexhaustible material prosperity, which they then proceeded to compromise by a series of untimely social reforms that brought the already shattered national finances to the verge of ruin. If ever a moment was propitious for the Germans to force a showdown, it was the autumn of 1938.

Yet however sick the French became, without British aid the Germans, even assisted by the Italians, could not have hoped to get on top of Europe. All British Cabinets after the War assisted Germany more or less. The National Governments after 1931 seemed determined that the Nazis should without fighting obtain everything Britishers had fought the Great War to prevent.

Behind the British government was a heterogeneous but imposing mass of citizens, prepared, for various reasons, to trust, encourage and support a German gangster régime. Some of these Britishers were merely hard-fisted property owners who hated and feared

what they called "Bolshevism" more than any conceivable loss of freedom, self-government, Empire or honor. They were particularly alarmed by the emergence of the Popular Front Government in France and by the heroism shown by the Popular Front Government in Spain in resisting German and Italian invasion. If the point had come when a majority in any country should advocate expropriation and managed economy and collectivism, these money lovers preferred at heart to do away with democracy altogether. Hitlerism, with all its odious horrors, contained in their eyes nothing essentially subversive. For was it not the rule of an "aristocracy"? The fact that this aristocracy was firmly seated on the neck of men of property and that conditions in Germany and Italy were becoming increasingly similar to those in Soviet Russia was one that they stubbornly refused to see. In any case they preferred throwing the smaller nations of Europe to the Nazi wolves rather than appealing to or accepting the aid of the Soviets. . . .

Another group consisted of disgruntled, non-conformist pacifists who had always damned the Versailles Treaty as the world's major iniquity. If the Germans, these people said, had rallied around a rough fanatic like Hitler, whose fault was it but that of the monstrous Allies who by their inhuman treatment had ruined the German Republic? Just give the Germans "justice" and in a short time they would settle down and be the dear *gemuetlich* lot they had always been! Toward the fundamental continuity that led from William the Second's megalomania to Hitler's ultimate goal of world dominion, these disgruntled Tolstoians were blind.

Still other Britishers felt a religious, racial or "nat-

ural" sympathy for Germans, disliked Frenchmen and hated Jews almost as much as any Nazi. There was a further small but peaceful clique animated by religious beliefs that denied the "reality" of evil, and admired Hitler as almost divine. Surely the poor Germans, like everybody else, could not wish another dreadful war! As though the poor Germans, *en masse*, were going to have anything to say about it!

Still others favored Germany commercially. True, the Germans had borrowed large sums of money and made no effort to pay them back. But had Great Britain done anything else to the United States? After all, one could still do business with the Germans, even under the Nazis, and what Central Europe needed was stability. All this salad of little States spreading from Saxony to Syria could never offer the requisite solidity, especially since Soviet Russia had imprudently been accepted into the councils of democratic Europe. The League of Nations, with its absurd insistence on equality among members, large or small, effective or inefficient, black, brown, yellow or white, was a dangerous encouragement to revolt, both international and internal, on the part of the submerged. What was needed in Europe was real authority: how better achieve it than by a Four Power Pact wherein each of the European Powers (minus the immoral and half-Asiatic Soviets, of course) should dominate in its own sphere. Out of such a "Four Boss" Europe, conceivably a better League could eventually be constructed, minus all the sentimentality and protection of the backward and inefficient. Democracy was all very well for Englishmen who, under their class system, were able to ward off too much of it. But why

should one worry about the political life of a lot of foreigners, anyway? Fascism? Merely a by-product of ambitious poverty, easily to be eliminated by reasonable concessions. Stop all this talk about senseless *isms* anyway, turn Europe back into the hands of the strong, begin by sharing wealth and prosperity with the dangerous Fascist countries, Germany, Italy, even Japan, along the lines of the Van Zeeland Report, forget the "hopeless and dangerous policy" of Versailles that was "doomed from the beginning." For regardless of the "surface manifestations of Nazism and Fascism," until this was accomplished there could be no "stable equilibrium and no real hope for peace in Central Europe."¹

The obstacle to all this "splendor" was less that so many Britishers had died to prevent it, than the French system of alliances, which practically made it impossible. True, British diplomacy had striven for years to break the "French system," to weaken and isolate France. A great deal had been accomplished. Yugoslavia had been induced to denature the Little Entente, thanks to skilful playing upon Prince Regent Paul's hatred of the Bolsheviks who confiscated his personal property. The Belgians had not been prevented from returning to "complete neutrality" through sacrificing the military alliance with France. The Franco-Polish alliance, thanks to the Germanophile sentiments which Colonel Joseph Beck shared with British Conservatives, had become a semi-fiction. The Poles disliked the Czechoslovaks owing to the

¹The London *Times* (November 7, 1938) contains a singularly revealing presentation of this puerile and reactionary theory. Hitler and Goebbels could not have provided anything more dangerous with which to dope the democracies.

latter's refusal to forward munitions to Poland in 1920 when Marshal Pilsudski set out to conquer the entire Ukraine from the Bolsheviks. But France still had the sympathy of the Yugoslav people, a firm alliance with Czechoslovakia, an understanding with Roumania, and, in addition, an agreement with the Soviets that was reinforced by a Czecho-Soviet Pact.

From the viewpoint of narrow-minded British Tories, this was all very unfortunate. For with the United States aloof and an open alliance with Nazi Germany still unpalatable to most of the English, Britain simply dared not break with France or allow France to be beaten. Therefore the new Anglo-French "Entente" which was, however, less a love affair than a *mariage de raison*. Quite cheerfully they stood by and watched Italians and Germans help their puppet, General Franco, turn Spain into an aggressive Fascist State, and shrewdly prevented the French from interfering to stop this. Mere community in democracy meant nothing to Cliveden and its likes, for what did Cliveden know of democracy? Had not British aristocrats consistently favored the medieval but "aristocratic" Hungarians against the modern, enlightened and democratic Czechoslovaks? Yet the French, with all their unpleasant traits, still possessed the only army in Europe that could, at a signal from Great Britain, defend the Channel ports and the Low Countries against a conceivable German attack. How unfortunate that if Germany jumped on one of the French allies and France went to its assistance, Great Britain would be compelled to assist France and once more crush Germany under a new "Versailles" even more detrimental to "stable equilibrium" in Central

Europe and to the Fascist idea that was Europe's "main bulk against Bolshevism"! Mussolini duped the capitalists by his preposterous claim to have saved Italy from Communism; against all verisimilitude Hitler, with his uncanny insight into human stupidity, repeated the trick. Besides, the Soviets might demonstrate some real power and, by right of it, henceforth claim a major place in European affairs.

The great thing to do was therefore to immobilize France. This aim could best be achieved by a Franco victory in Spain and by a denunciation of the Czecho-French alliance. The Non-Intervention Committee could, under British leadership, be counted on to see that Franco won in Spain. The Czechish affair was more difficult. Thanks to British cunning and persistence it was accomplished far more quickly than anyone could have imagined. In justifying his part in the September betrayal of the Czechs, Chamberlain in October, 1938, told the House of Commons that he had come to consider a "solution of the Czechoslovakian problem" as "the last obstacle to appeasement" of Germany. . . .

In sober truth there never was a "Czechoslovakian problem" at all. When Austria-Hungary cracked like a rotten tree in 1918, the enterprising and competent Czechs, with their backward Slovak cousins, simply took control of all the territories that had once been theirs. The Czechoslovak Republic, as legalized by the Treaties of Saint Germain and of Trianon, finally came to include about one "foreigner" for every two Czechoslovaks. In 1938 the population consisted of ten million Czechoslovaks, just under three and a half

million German-speaking Sudetens, seven hundred thousand Hungarians, about eighty thousand Poles, and a quarter of a million Ruthenians (or Ukrainians). The Sudetens, of mixed Teutonic and Slav origin, had never been a part of modern Germany. But they spoke and considered themselves German. Economic and above all strategical considerations were predominant in their allotment to the Czechs.

But Czechs and Slovaks are a fecund lot. As the years passed the importance of the minorities steadily declined. Economically, under Austria, the Sudeten regions had grown up with the Czechish Bohemia and Moravia, and it was impossible to cut them off without still further aggravating the war ruin. Strategically, the Sudetens occupied the only defensible portion of the country, the steep rim of the "fortress of Bohemia." Without the Sudeten rim, the fortress was admittedly without walls; but left intact, it could enable a well-armed and high-spirited people to put up a resistance that would make even a Great Power hesitate to attack it. After all, it was a choice of defalcations from the principle of self-determination: was it preferable for something over three million Germans to be subordinate to ten million Czechoslovaks or for the latter to remain accomplices of German imperialism? The treaty makers chose the former alternative. With French assistance, the Czechs nearly surrounded their country with an all but impregnable "Maginot Line." They prepared their people, in case of need, to put from thirty-four to forty divisions of soldiers into the field—nearly half of the forces of France! They developed the Skoda Works at Pilsen and elsewhere, traditionally the finest arms factory in

Europe, into something gigantic. Far in the impenetrable east of their country, they prepared skeleton munition factories *entirely underground and bomb-proof*. Underground shelters for aircraft were dug. In fact, so long as Czechoslovakia remained intact and allied to the Western democracies, German aggression was hamstrung. German expansion southward and eastward was blocked. Hence the personal hatred of Adolf Hitler for Edvard Benes and the hysterical German protests against being encircled. For what the Germans could not forgive the Czechs was not the treatment, good or bad, of the Sudetens, but their very existence in the center of Europe as a compact bloc opposing Germanism. A strong aggressive Germany would have attacked the Czechs had there been no Sudetens at all.

In foreign policy this State was an invaluable asset to the victors of the Great War. Internally it was valuable to world democracy. For alone in Central Europe the Czechoslovaks, under the leadership of a great statesman like Masaryk, a devoted patriot like Benes, built up out of their somewhat heterogeneous populations a modern, liberal democratic State, in many ways a model to the West. Slovaks, Hungarians and Ukrainians, nearly totally illiterate after a thousand years of rule by "aristocratic" Magyars, were given schools and liberty. The magnificent industry that had grown up predominantly in the Sudeten districts under old Austria was improved and enlarged. In the years after the Great Depression, democratically ruled Czechoslovakia recovered economically far faster than "efficient Germany" under Hitler. Czechoslovakia produced more iron and steel than

Italy; "Made in Czechoslovakia" began to compete successfully with "Made in Germany" on the world markets; most of the population were prosperous and contented. There were exceptions—a handful of Czech reactionaries found the régime "too liberal." The bigoted third of the ignorant Slovaks clamored for greater local autonomy. A majority of the German-speaking Sudetens could not reconcile themselves to their loss of control in the country. Of these oppositions only that of the Germans was important.

The Sudetens, members of the group that for three hundred years had governed the Czechs, would not accept the turning of the tables. That they had treated the Czechs as a *Bedientenvolk* or people of lackeys was, they claimed, in the nature of things. In their parks had been signs: "Dogs and Czechs keep out!" But that these lackeys should become the masters was intolerable. Immediately after the 1918 revolution, the Czechs offered them full and equal co-operation in a common State. With a few exceptions the Sudetens, including the Socialists, haughtily refused. Using to the full the liberties granted by the Czechoslovak majority, they fought the new régime in every way. They had their own deputies in Parliament, some local autonomy, their own free press. From their cries one might have thought no political group was ever so hardly used as themselves. In point of fact, they were by far the best-treated minority in Central Europe. Their real complaints boiled down to: 1) they were refused complete autonomy; 2) they were not allowed to join Germany or suppress liberty in the name of a local "Nazi Party"; 3) the prolific Czechs gradually moved into German-speaking districts near

the frontiers (just as German immigrants had once taken the entire Sudeten strip and much more from the Czechs); 4) the key positions in the State and the army were kept in the hands of loyal Czechs; 5) when, in time of economic crisis, it was possible to favor a German or a Czechoslovak, the Prague authorities generally favored the latter. This was all. Other charges were sheer propaganda which no one took seriously. None, that is, except a little group of international Tories and Fascists, semi-despotic Polish and Hungarian rulers, and the British Legation in Prague.

In the eyes of British diplomats, Prague, one of the most fascinating cities in the world, had small charm. For it lacked a proper "society"; that is, a group of parasitical aristocrats "developed" to the point of aping British customs and spending long week-ends on country estates. In the entire country there were only three golf links! The ancient Czechoslovak aristocracy had died in the Thirty Years' War and the barons, counts and such-like who remained after 1918 were Germans, embittered members of the unseated Austrian ruling class among which British diplomats felt so much more at home than among the artistic and hard-working Czechs. Incredible as it seems, British snobbery actually played an historical rôle.¹

The Nazis in Germany were, to be sure, anything but an aristocracy, having been sent by the Old Nick

¹ Carlo Sforza, former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and an authentic "aristocrat," wrote of Lord Runciman: "He did nothing but follow the example of his more blue-blooded predecessors; during his stay in Bohemia there was not a *Fürst* or a *Graf* with a castle and a shoot between Marienbad and Prague in whose house the British mediator did not pass a week-end."

to destroy what was left of the anachronistic Junker class. They were a mixture of indignant "white collar" proletarians, shopkeepers, revolutionaries, *déclassés*, and aggressive Nihilists whom rich and "nobly born" Germans supported—ultimately to their own ruin. But how could British diplomats be expected to understand this, especially when told the contrary by these amiable Sudeten magnates whom a tolerant Czech government persisted in ignoring even when they preached treason to the State! So when, from Germany, a disguised Nazi Party was secretly organized among the disgruntled Sudetens, its leader, the former gymnastic teacher Konrad Henlein, was actually invited by the Royal Institute of International Affairs to come and tell a select London public just how horribly the poor Germans in Czechoslovakia were being treated by the abominable Czechs. The talk, in which Henlein carefully denied any affiliation (!) with the German Nazi Party (he was the agent), was a great success and a certain number of honest, stupid, upper-class Britishers were actually convinced that here again "innocent Germans" were being wronged by a people "of whom we know next to nothing," as Neville Chamberlain at a later date so graciously referred to the people whose independence he had destroyed. British snobbery and French treason were, in fact, necessary if Germany was to redeem the Sudetens without a war that, whatever its outcome, would almost certainly have meant the end of the Nazi régime. Here obviously was a great chance for the Appeasement Policy inaugurated under another name by Chamberlain's predecessor, Baldwin, in the cases of Manchuria, Ethiopia and

Spain, and perfected by Neville Chamberlain in the case of Czechoslovakia. The Appeasement Policy consisted in surrendering to aggressive States everything that the Great War had been fought to preserve, under the apparent impression that only so could the world become reconciled and "real peace" ensue.

At what moment did the actual diplomatic sale of the Czechs for a mess of appeasement begin?

There is reason to believe that at Berchtesgaden, in November, 1937, Lord Halifax, that blameless but guileless statesman, intimated to the Fuehrer that Great Britain, being "disinterested" in Central Europe, would not move to prevent the rape of the Austrians (most of whom did not wish to be made German) or prevent the "redemption" of the Sudetens (and the enslavement of the Czechoslovaks), provided the said "redemption" could be accomplished without violence.

The difficulty lay in the fact that Czechoslovakia, however little known to Neville Chamberlain, meant considerable to the British Foreign Office and a great deal to patriotic French statesmen, diplomats and generals. Replacing intelligent Foreign Office officials by yes-men and working through a pro-German industrial adviser could lighten the difficulty in London. Paris was a greater problem. But after all, there were anti-Czech politicians in Paris; anti-red Fascists like Jacques Doriot; a pro-Hitlerian conservative leader, Pierre-Etienne Flandin; Pierre Laval, chief executioner of the League of Nations and friend of Mussolini. There were "upper-class" writers like Alfred Fabre-Luce, Drieu la Rochelle and Alphonse de Chateaubriant; newspaper organizations like the

Agence Economique et Financière, Le Matin, Le Journal, Le Temps, even *L'Oeuvre*; newspapermen like Fernand de Brinon, Maurras and Jean Piot who could be counted on to support "appeasement" as Chamberlain saw it. There were literally millions of pacifists who had been bullied into considering the Great War as a failure, ready to believe that Adolf Hitler was a "man like everybody else" with whom one could quite easily arrange an honorable and lasting peace that would right the "wrongs of Versailles." As French Foreign Minister, finally, there came upon the scene early in 1938 Georges Bonnet. Bonnet understood finance; he had been a successful Ambassador in Washington but (to put it mildly) he had no stomach for a fight of any kind.

At the meeting of Premier Daladier and Bonnet with Chamberlain and Halifax at London at the end of April, 1938, the Englishmen pressed their thesis about the Sudetens upon Daladier without visible success. But almost at the same time it began to be voiced around Europe that French foreign policy had changed and that the Czechs were soon to be thrown to the German wolves by intrepid champions of British and French democracy. Almost out of the blue arose an international outcry to compel the cruel Czechoslovaks to grant something approaching autonomy to the "martyred" Sudetens.

Adolf Hitler leaped at the chance. Increased British rearmament, which was Chamberlain's only positive contribution to European stability, looked insignificant in view of the fact that Germany was still spending more on arms than France and Britain together, and thereby increasing the disproportion be-

tween the war potentials of the dictatorships and the democracies. The Germans certainly had some reason to believe that a campaign for seizing the Sudetens would meet no opposition from Britain. While Mussolini successfully extracted from eager Chamberlain a Mediterranean Agreement thanks to which Italy was to get a success in Spain, hard cash and some maneuvering freedom against his masterful German associate, with Britain getting nothing but empty promises, Hitler decided to "redeem" the Sudetens by blackmail, but without violence, according to the alleged intimation by Halifax at Berchtesgaden the previous November. In May, 1938, the Fuehrer launched his long-expected diplomatic offensive against Czechoslovakia. He ordered a troop concentration on the French and Czechish frontiers. The Sudetens, advised in advance, had prepared "provisional governments" and colored bunting to celebrate union with the Third Reich. The Germans of course were in no position to fight. They knew that their Siegfried Line on the French frontier was as yet a mere screen behind which real fortifications were slowly being constructed and that, in all likelihood, it could not prevent a lightning-like French invasion of the Palatinate. But they counted on threat of war and British complicity.

Then something went wrong. Adolf Hitler received the second and greater reverse of his incredible career. For instead of capitulating like German Social Democrats and Austrian Clericals, the Czechs mobilized 90,000 men, more quickly and efficiently than the Germans. The French increased the number of soldiers under arms and rounded up a few thou-

sand reserve officers; while Premier Edouard Daladier was informing the German Ambassador in Paris that German invasion of Czechoslovakia would mean general war, he toyed with the signed order of general mobilization on his desk! The Russians, contrary to a story which the Poles and their friends had been spreading abroad, let it be known they would imitate France. What finally convinced the Germans was the British attitude. Acting with a degree of independence that has never been exactly determined, the British Ambassador in Berlin, Nevile Henderson, intervened sternly at the German Foreign Office and ended by ordering a special train from the German government in order to evacuate the British diplomatic colony. Afterwards he was supposed to have acted in a moment of hysteria. But hysteria or not, ordering the train did the trick. Faced with the alternatives of fighting or backing down, the Nazis welshed.

Here was Chamberlain's historical chance: it had been demonstrated how peace in Europe could be really saved. Italy's economic distress had now reached the point where there was talk of selling the country's artistic masterpieces abroad, and collecting income tax in advance. Another few months of adamant resistance on the part of the democracies and the danger from the Fascist Axis might be over.

But Adolf Hitler had taken the democracies' measure. France, he realized, had acted under the impression that Germany was still vulnerable to attack. Therefore he suddenly conscripted hundreds of thousands of workmen and put them busy turning the Siegfried Line into something like a real defence. Meanwhile he felt out the British to learn what had

happened to upset the arrangement. Here the "Fifth Column," his allies in the Tory camp, stood him in good stead. They informed him that British resistance was "all a mistake." To confirm this tip from a source that had never failed before, the Fuehrer sent his confidant Captain Wiedemann to London to see Halifax on the eve of the British King's departure for Paris. Had Britain decided to oppose the rape of the Sudetens even if it could be achieved without violence?

On this point matters are not yet clear. According to one version, Chamberlain, in an exchange of letters with Daladier in June, confirmed Britain's interest in Czech independence. But what about Czech territorial integrity? Certainly, from this point on, the Germans acted precisely as if they were hand in glove with the British leaders. The latter increased their pressure on the Czechs to hurry up and make concessions to the abused Sudetens, and announced the sending of Lord Runciman to Prague to "mediate" between Henlein and Benes.

Daladier, in a momentary spasm of independence, refused to be a party to this trick but Halifax stuck to his guns. Runciman, accompanied by a Foreign Office staff, went to Prague in an "unofficial" capacity in order to find a proper compromise between Germans and Czechoslovaks. On the other hand, Their Britannic Majesties went to Paris, were received with incredible pomp, and practically cemented an alliance with the French.

Previous arrangement or not, henceforth the Anglo-German game was incredibly astute. The British, through Runciman, set about accustoming the world

to the idea that something absolutely must be done about the Sudetens if war was to be avoided. He duped the Czechs and prevented them from mobilizing too early. The German task, on the other hand, was, by hasty strengthening of their fortifications, to convince the French that they could hardly save the threatened Czechs; Germany must simultaneously mobilize enough men to terrify the Czechs, the French and the British publics, while refraining from actual warfare, in case of which the French might have to go to the assistance of the Czechs and the British to that of the French. Meanwhile Britain must not appear to desert France. Yet France, backed by Britain, must bully the Czechs into not fighting; for if the Czechs fought, French public opinion might not permit an unmitigated betrayal and war might ensue.

Incredible as it may seem, this complicated and infinitely risky piece of international skulduggery completely succeeded.¹

Britain and France could not desert Czechoslovakia in case of war. But Chamberlain and Bonnet had no intention of permitting a war. They decided, perhaps only semi-consciously, that the betrayal must be made, half in the name of a specious justice (the Sudeten right of self-determination), half as submission to Hitler's threat of force. The ensuing tragedy, in which Czech independence, French honor and British prestige were perhaps irreparably shattered, can be condensed into a few scenes.

The first took place in Paris about September 10.

¹ See the amazingly naïve confession of this performance in *Histoire Secrète de la Conciliation de Munich*, by Alfred Fabre-Luce. In this work of a partisan of "appeasement" the "game of the peace party" is described with both insight and candor.

Georges Bonnet, French Foreign Minister, was reconciled to betrayal. But he hoped to justify it before the world by a British refusal to follow France into conflict. This was precisely what the wily Chamberlain would not allow. When therefore, for the sake of the record, the French Ambassador in London demanded from Halifax a point-blank statement of what Britain would do in case of trouble, the latter gave an all but categorical promise of support. When this answer became known in Paris, the French Foreign Minister had to change his tactics: he led a masterful campaign of propaganda, suppression of information, rumor-spreading, personal appeal, political and other pressure. It was a famous start.

The second scene occurred in Hitler's house at Berchtesgaden, September 15. Hitler, true to his rôle of bully, had demanded at Nüremberg self-determination for the Sudetens, those "tortured creatures." The Sudetens dutifully brayed and rioted on order whenever the cue called for the one or the other. Runciman, the Greek Sinon of Chamberlain's Trojan-Horse tactics, after an impeccable analysis of the situation, concluded in a long report, not that Hitler should be sternly warned to drop both propaganda and agitation or face a Franco-British ultimatum, but that the "tortured creatures" should be restored to the Nazi Fatherland by the division and disarmament of Czechoslovakia. And Chamberlain, that dauntless wrecker, hurried to Berchtesgaden to present the Fuehrer *outright* with all he could demand (and admittedly more than even he expected) on the sole condition that he would not fight for it.

The third and fatal scene occurred at London,

September 18, when Chamberlain, aided by Bonnet, induced the hesitant Daladier to accept the decision that dishonored France, which, up to that time, was free to stand by the Czechs and literally compel the British to stand by the French.

Scene Four, a masterpiece of shame, took place in the Castle on the Hill, in Prague, at two-fifteen in the morning of September 21. Here the diplomatic representatives of the Great Western Democracies coerced an exhausted and almost distraught little man, Edvard Benes, President of the Czechoslovak Republic. By threat of abandoning the Czechs to concentric attack by the Germans, the Poles and the Hungarians, they compelled him to accept Hitler's terms, magically transformed into a "Franco-British Plan."

Then came a tragi-comic interlude at Godesberg-am-Rhein the following two days. Here, in the course of several hours' shouting and note-writing, Hitler, having seen into the quaking heart of his interlocutor, bullied him into transmitting to Paris and Prague (without formally approving) a proposal going far beyond the conditions of Berchtesgaden. As a result, the Czechs were allowed to mobilize, the British Fleet put to sea, and for twenty-four hours it looked as though a war was really possible—a war that would almost certainly have saved Czechoslovakia and broken the back of Nazidom. But, encouraged by distant President Roosevelt, who had been misled into believing that the democracies might well be beaten if war came, the champions of European democracy implored the only too eager Mussolini to persuade Hitler not to fight, but instead to call a conference at

Munich and accept the submission of his visitors (Chamberlain having meanwhile written Hitler another letter assuring the latter that he could get all he wanted without fighting).

The ante-penultimate scene was the Conference in the *Fuehrerhaus* at Munich where Hitler and Mussolini proceeded to carve Czechoslovakia to the bone with Chamberlain graciously consenting and the dazed Daladier actually informing the Conference that if the misguided Czechs, who were kept outside, dared to oppose the vivisection prepared for them by the four fine gentlemen, he, Daladier, would take the initiative in forcing France's ally to submit!

The penultimate scene consisted of three movie shorts: conscience-stricken Daladier in the airplane that brought him home from Munich gloomily looking down on the thousands assembled to welcome him at Le Bourget Field, and muttering, "They have come to hoot me!"—only to be transformed into a sort of Parsifal when he finally grasped the fact that he was being applauded as a co-savior of peace; the same Daladier the following day laying a wreath on the tomb of that Unknown French Soldier who, we may hope, was unaware of the proceedings; Chamberlain beaming at the House of Commons and accepting the homage of a grateful world as the man who "saved peace for our generation." For, as Chamberlain's Cabinet colleague, Malcolm Macdonald, said later: "There is no reason why the world should be plunged into another Great War to prevent changes *which are desirable* and which will remove some of the causes of friction in Europe." (Hitler over Europe desirable as

removing causes of European friction, dear God! But he said it.)

The final scene was that of well-behaved Reichswehr troops, gradually occupying the rim of Czechoslovakia, marveling at the impregnability of the Czech fortifications and at the democratic politicians who had tamely handed them to the Reich, but passing beyond the Sudeten territories and cutting into Czech districts on the pretext of the 1910 census, or with no pretext at all, while Nazis at Berlin secured the "consent" of the French and British to each new outrage by the simple device of offering to go to war if it were refused. . . .

So much for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. When it was all over and the Polish and Hungarian jackals had had their cut, there emerged what Chamberlain predicted would be a "happier" Czechoslovakia, amputated of a third of its population, thirty per cent of its territory, most of its industry and natural resources, by an ally and a friendly State. Although the mutilated State still retained nearly half a million Sudetens and two hundred thousand Hungarians, it was deprived of nearly a million Czechs, a third of a million Slovaks and sixty thousand Ukrainians.

As an anonymous writer in a German refugee publication aptly described the situation:

"The German colonial empire is growing with dizzy speed. It lies, not in Africa, but in the heart of Europe. The subjugated colonial tribes are not Negroes but Germans. Like the seven million Germans of Austria, the three million Germans of the Bohemian borderland never had any desire to join the obligatory

community [*Zwangsgemeinschaft*] of the Third Reich. They wanted autonomy, but not annexation."

So much for the "desirability" of the change brought about by the British and French defection. Henceforth, to be sure, Britons, who might be knaves but never slaves, would hardly be forced to follow the French into a war in any Quixotic attempt to defend democracy and decency against Nazi horror. For barring accident, the Germans had been permitted to make themselves the masters of Central Europe.

As for the "removal of the causes of friction in Europe"—a promise which naturally attracted the business men—Chamberlain's little non-aggression paper obtained at Munich, and the Franco-British "guarantee" of the new Czech frontiers, the first was a pipe dream of Chamberlain, Bonnet, the Cliveden set, the London *Times* and Colonel Blimp, the second a Hitler joke and the third a cold-blooded mockery. In less than a week after the Munich Agreement, the Germans were indicating just which British politicians they would not tolerate in office. Within seven weeks Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels was informing London that "the time when Germany took orders from England is gone, never to return" . . . "it does not often happen that the world is divided up afresh . . . I have the impression that we are living in such an historic hour." Finally, as a Christmas present to appeasers, an Italian newspaper printed in France began twitting the French for failing to understand that the skilful policy of Chamberlain had no other aim than that of obtaining a victory for General Franco in Spain; and the hand-picked so-called Deputies of the Italian

Chamber set up a howl for the dismemberment of France and France's Colonial Empire by the immediate transfer to Italy of Nice, Savoy, Corsica, Tunisia, and French Somaliland, with Jibuti. The fruits of appeasement were ripening fast.

Three months after the Munich surrender, they were few in Western Europe who still maintained that what had been accomplished by that surrender was abstractly "desirable." But millions still argued that it: 1) saved peace; 2) could not have been avoided without a war, which very conceivably would have been lost by the democracies, in no case could have saved Czechoslovakia, and would, in any case, have entailed the virtual destruction by air bombardment of the British and French capitals. Therefore, the "appeasement policy" was right and should be continued.

This argument seems so entirely devoid of substance that one wonders if it was not coldly elaborated to prevent the British and French peoples, who would eventually have to foot the bill, from calling the "peacemakers" of Munich to stern account.

That the Munich settlement was, in sober truth, no settlement at all, was proved to the hilt by the simple fact that it did not, for as much as two weeks, allay the clamors of the Axis Powers. It did not stabilize conditions in Central Europe, either politically or economically. Instead, it opened a period of complete confusion there. Why, if settlement had been achieved, did so many Englishmen choose the months just after Munich to begin shipping their capital to the United States? Why did the governments of the Netherlands

and of Belgium decide that the moment had come to move their gold reserves to London and conceivably to points farther West?

The Munich capitulation, by altering the European military equation so mightily to Germany's benefit, gave Western Powers the choice between an endless series of new surrenders and almost certain war. It did not even localize the war danger in the European East, since the Axis Powers decided that for the time being further blackmail of the democratic softies was easier than moving against the Russian wasps' nest. The Italian Faust was growing restless and Hitler-Mephistopheles simply had to go about securing some concrete advantages for him in Spain and the Eastern Mediterranean, lest he be tempted to sell out in the other direction.

Contrary to prevalent Tory-talk, the Munich surrender could almost certainly have been avoided without war, had British determination to assist France in checking German expansion been proclaimed with sufficient firmness and entire sincerity at an early enough date. Indeed, without British acquiescence, passive or otherwise, it is almost certain Germany would never have stirred. One must never forget that to a small but powerful group of aristocratic zanies in London, Adolf Hitler was not a modern Attila, but a superhuman figure, a being sent by God to restore European Order and confound the "Radicals".

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**GERMANY
PUTS THE
CLOCK BACK**

CHAPTER I

THE RAPE OF PRUSSIA

"If there has to be a dictatorship, it will be ours!"

Otto Wels, Chairman of the German Social-Democratic Party (1930).

IT WAS the twentieth of July, 1932. Baron Franz von Papen, Chancellor of Germany, sat behind his desk in the brand new Chancellery in Berlin and fumbled with a pencil. He had a gift for saying unpleasant things in the most charming manner. And yet, what he was doing . . . well, there was no use worrying about it now he had started, despite the faces of the three men opposite, whom he had called to the Chancellery this sunny July morning. Three members of the Cabinet of Prussia: Carl Severing, the Social-Democratic Minister of the Interior; Heinrich Hirtsiefer, the Catholic who looked after Public Welfare; Otto Klepper, the Democrat in charge of Finances. Of the three, only Severing, the Chancellor hoped, would be affected by what he had to announce. And with Severing, the absent, ailing Prussian Minister-President, Otto Braun, the only Socialist whom Hindenburg liked. Anyway, there was no use mincing matters, Papen thought—and began to speak.

President von Hindenburg, he related, had for some time been increasingly worried by the trend of

events in Prussia. The political disorders were growing, the Prussian Ministers seemed not to have the situation well in hand. Moreover, their political attitude was decidedly not in harmony with that of the Cabinet of National Concentration over which he, Franz von Papen, had the honor to preside. Finally, the President had grudgingly come to the conclusion that peace and order were no longer being properly maintained in Prussia. Therefore, for reasons of State, he had conferred upon the Cabinet of the *Reich*, full powers for a special task.

"Minister-President Braun and you, Herr Severing, have been relieved of your offices. In your place, I myself have been named Minister-President of Prussia, and have appointed Dr. Franz Bracht, our worthy mayor of Essen, to be my Deputy Commissioner and acting Minister of the Interior in your place." There, the worst was over, the Chancellor reflected.

Carl Severing answered quietly. Obviously he was not at all taken by surprise. Such an action, he said, could be justified only if it be proven that he and Braun had been guilty of neglecting their duty. This, however, was not the present case. Peace and order were as well maintained in Prussia as elsewhere in Germany. Then, raising his voice and staring from under his enormous forehead directly at his adversary:

"I consider your action a breach of the law and of the Constitution. I shall yield only to violence. These days are important for world history, *Herr Reichs-Chancellor*, and a Socialist Minister would be violating his duty if he left his office with the stain of desertion upon him!"

"Oh," exclaimed the Chancellor, "if you are looking for a chance to save your face, Herr Severing, no doubt we can come to an agreement about the amount of violence to be employed."

This was not what the Socialist had been thinking and the Chancellor knew it, but it had established their relative positions.

"It is not a question of prestige," Severing finally answered quietly. "It is a question of right."

Dictatorial Chancellor and dismissed Minister, baron and ex-locksmith, Conservative and Socialist, looked straight at each other for a brief second. Then the three Prussians left.

Franz von Papen rang the bell. Ten minutes later, according to plans approved by Hindenburg and carefully prepared by Kurt von Schleicher, the Minister of Defense, the City of Berlin and the Province of Brandenburg had been placed under Military Law. A contest of power was imminent between Carl Severing, who theoretically disposed of the Prussian Police Force, and Lieutenant-General Gerd von Rundstedt, commander of the Third Military District, who actually controlled a division of regular troops. The situation was set for civil war.

Carl Severing returned to his office in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, Unter den Linden. His course, too, had been planned in advance. He did nothing.

Chancellor von Papen's "cleansing of Prussia" extended not only to Braun and Severing, whom the German reactionaries had always hated and slightly feared, but to the Chief of Police, Albert Greszinsky, to the Vice-Chief, Bernhard Weiss, and to the Police

Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Magnus Heimannsberg, all well-known Republicans, as well. Informed of their dismissal, they, too, refused to take orders from General von Rundstedt, and waited to see what the Chancellor would do.

None of them had long to wait. Exactly at noon, Captain Hauße of the *Reichswehr*, accompanied by two soldiers, appeared at the Prussian State Ministry, the offices of the absent Minister-President Braun, and in the name of General von Rundstedt, declared the premises closed. The ailing Minister-President, who had returned only that day, was persuaded by his friends to stay away from his office and avoid an open conflict.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, another *Reichswehr* Captain, Grase by name, and fifteen infantrymen bristling with hand grenades, appeared at Police Headquarters in the Alexanderplatz. Before the eyes of their subordinates, Greszinsky, Weiss and Heimannsberg were arrested on the charge of not obeying the order to desist from further official activities.

Almost at the same time, a motorcar drew up before the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and out of it stepped, entirely unaccompanied, the newly-appointed Deputy Commissioner for Prussia, Dr. Franz Bracht, a heavy-set, rather jovial man with the scarred cheek of the dueling student. He had come, so he told Severing, to take over the Ministry. Severing curtly refused to give it up. After a long conversation Bracht left again, much to the amusement of the crowd, who had waited in the street since noon to see the fun.

At eight in the evening Bracht returned, accompanied by the former Chief of Police of Essen, who was to succeed Greszinsky, and a police officer, and formally summoned Severing to turn over the Ministry. Again Severing said he would yield only to violence. But no violence was applied. At a definite threat from Bracht, Severing left his offices and retired to his dwelling within the same building, leaving the Deputy Commissioner in complete control.

The following day, the non-Socialist members of the Prussian Cabinet declared that they stood with Braun and Severing and, like them, would yield only to violence. Thereupon Papen's hope in their cooperation had to be dropped, but he sent the ironical message that they would perhaps be kind enough to inform him in just what manner they wished the violence to be applied. Minister Hirtsiefer was the last to leave his office, when, on the twenty-second, Bracht appeared in person and told him to clear out.

The intentions of President von Hindenburg and Chancellor von Papen became only too clear in the days following. One by one, practically every outspoken Republican official in the upper ranks of the Prussian Administration, whether Socialist or not, was peremptorily turned out of his office and replaced by an enemy of the Weimar Constitution. Most of the new officials were of noble birth, fitting choices of a "Barons' Cabinet." Even former officials who had in 1920 lost their positions for participating in the armed insurrection of Wolfgang Kapp against the Republic, were reinstated in office.

The German Social-Democrats was the party

chiefly responsible for what there was of revolution in 1918 and it was they who more than anyone else succeeded the former Imperial rulers. They had had it in their power to eliminate reactionaries like Franz von Papen from German political life, and by the construction of a purely Republican Army, permanently to scotch any re-birth of the former privileged classes. In an exact sense, they had become the special guardians of the democratic Republic, which from their stronghold, in Prussia, a State comprising three-fifths of the territory and population of the *Reich*, they continued to protect long after they lost their original predominant position in the national Government. In 1920 they actually saved the young democracy by calling a general strike. In 1932 either the Social-Democrats had to save it again or it could no longer be saved. Yet they yielded to a mere threat—as the jeering Communists had always said they would.

As Prussian Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing was the reorganizer and ultimate commander of the Prussian police, whose sixty-seven thousand men made it, after the Regular Army of 100,000, the largest armed force in Germany. As a champion of the Republic, he entirely disposed of the Republican private organization, the *Reichsbanner*, with its powerful auxiliaries, the Socialist Sporting Organizations and the industrial sabotage groups, the Hammer Squads. As labor leader, he had decisive influence over the larger Trade Unions, the *Allgemeine Gewerkschaftsbund*. As a Social-Democratic official, he still commanded the loyalty of about eight million voters whose violent reaction was almost certain to be tem-

porarily seconded by that of five million Communists. All over Germany, Socialists who read the news of the ignominious dismissal of Braun and Severing waited for the inevitable answer—the General Strike—and waited in vain.

The guardians of the democratic Republic allowed themselves to be swept from office without a blow, like so many hired servants. Almost proudly, they announced that by their reasonableness they had saved Germany from a "blood bath." Yet this was a group that had always (in theory) upheld the idea of civil war, and it is difficult to see why, from the Socialist point of view, a "blood bath" in defense of one's civic rights and legitimate political power should not be at least as justified as a war against foreigners. Privately the Socialists gave another reason. Resistance, they said, would have been hopeless. Recent elections had cost them the control of Prussia. Well over fifty percent of the Germans, if one included the Communists, had, at least for the time being, decided against democracy. In a struggle against the Army, the President, the fourteen million followers of Adolf Hitler and the Communists (sure to try to push any resistance into revolution along Russian lines), the Republican minority would, they said, have had no chance. Touched by the wave of national hysteria, even some of the police officers were leaning toward Hitler. On three fronts the Social-Democrats and their few Liberal allies could not have fought successfully. Therefore, their duty was to capitulate with a minimum of loss and wait until the inevitable strike among their adversaries should prepare the way for their return to power.

There would have been logic in such arguments, had the problem been one of logic! In point of fact, it is by no means certain that desperate resistance on the part of the Socialists would not have secured them a partial victory. Had Severing sent his policemen and coolly arrested both Papen and Schleicher, while informing President von Hindenburg that he would oppose the threatened breach of the Constitution to the last step—that he would not shrink from calling a General Strike or setting the police to resist the Army with weapons or even shooting the imprisoned Ministers as hostages before surrendering to tyrannical force—it is conceivable that the Government, whose legal position was anything but secure, might well have preferred compromise. Even if the ultimate defeat of the Prussians had been certain, their brave resistance, especially if capped by the death of such a prominent Republican as Severing, a man whose entire life had been devoted to the cause of democratic socialism, would have stirred friends of liberty throughout the world.

Neither Papen nor Schleicher was eager for civil war and a General Strike was what they most feared. The promptness with which they took action against the few Communists who advocated it proved their state of mind.

Yet not even the German generals had believed that the Socialists would so feebly relinquish the power it had cost them fifty years to attain. Their collapse was an unmistakable signal to the world that democracy in Germany lay in agony.

And yet it might have been expected.

The German people had never shown the slightest

capacity in defending itself against domestic oppression. Time after time it had, after a show of discontent, capitulated practically without a blow to its time honored masters. To expect that even after thirteen and a half years of internal freedom the people would arise to defend anything so intangible as civic liberties was a childish illusion based on unfamiliarity with the national history.

Five groups had ruled pre-war Germany: the twenty-odd sovereigns with the Kaiser at their head, the Army officers, the officials, the aristocratic land-owners and the possessors of heavy industry. Amid a people conditioned to obedience, they alone knew what they wanted and were not afraid to take it. An experimental Republic that did not break the political necks of nearly all five groups was, in time, almost bound once more to fall under their rule. Such is the law of the jungle.

Only in dealing with foreigners were the old leaders inept. Defeat in the terrible war fought under their leadership cost them their position in 1918. It took them hardly more than thirteen years to recapture their lost power. Only the ex-sovereigns were still lacking—or preferred still to remain in the background, but the other four groups possessed the unbounded confidence of the new “sovereign,” President Paul von Hindenburg, a man of their own sort despite his formal oath to support the Republican Constitution. The aged general could hardly be expected to be an adept at constitutional law, and it was natural that he should, in good faith, accept any interpretation of the Weimar document his friends chose to furnish. The position of the highest official in a democracy was

not one easily understood by a man who had spent his entire life in the Prussian Army. As Heinrich Brüning explained it, in describing his own summary dismissal at the hands of Hindenburg, "The old Field Marshal sees no difference between changing German Chancellors and changing his Chiefs of Staff during the war."

The new rulers represented in Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher possessed no backing either in the Parliament or in the people—and needed none. They based their claim to rule on superior birth, tradition and patriotism, on the alleged national necessity of the moment, on unlimited audacity and on a confident familiarity with the political preference of almighty God. Their return to power spelled the eclipse or even the end of the popular democracy founded at Weimar in 1919. The rape of Prussia was but a public demonstration of a reaction inwardly consummated years before.

Germany had reverted to type.

CHAPTER II

OFF TO A BAD START

"And if, after the partial victories of their armies, the German politicians imposed the odious treaties of Brest-Litowsk and of Bucharest; the Entente leaders instead of rising to a higher level once the war was won, paid them in kind with the Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles."

BENEDETTO CROCE,

History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century.

ASK a German Democrat who was responsible for the German reaction. "The Allies," he will reply with bitterness. Ask the same question of nearly any foreigner then living in Germany and the answer is, "The German Republicans."

Both are right. Between them they go far toward exhausting the subject. Other replies are interesting but not convincing. Of course, as the Socialists said, the presence in the infant Republic of a resolute band of Communists bent on dragging the country into Bolshevism, may extenuate the failure of the Republicans. It cannot really explain it. Neither can the world economic crisis and the millions of unemployed. That the German Government, like the American or the British, had to bear the weight of business conditions it had not been really instrumental in producing, is clear. But that this world-

wide discontent with economic suffering took the hysterically nationalistic form it has assumed in Germany cannot be laid to mere poverty.

Unquestionably, the co-authors of the entire German reaction, including both Hitler and the Barons, were the Allied makers of the Versailles Treaty and the early German Republicans.

But could a better treaty have been made in the atmosphere of hatred, vengeance, cupidity, confusion and weariness, that lay over the Paris Peace Conference like an evil luster?

I think it could even then have been made by wiser, braver, though not necessarily more generous, men. Somewhat as follows:

The Allied armies do not accept Ludendorff's request for an armistice on terms they later set aside by brute force. They continue the war a little longer until the entire German people realize the futility of further resistance. (This avoids the immensely harmful legend of victorious German soldiers panting to continue the conflict through the winter of 1919, but stabbed in the back by treacherous workmen. Thanks to this myth the reactionaries have continually succeeded in bringing discredit upon the Republic. For these workmen are popularly supposed to have been bought with French gold.)

Garrisons in the Rhineland, as under the Treaty of Versailles, cut off this section from the rest of Germany for an indefinite period. That is, as reparations are paid, they withdraw, gradually, zone by zone. But the reparations are fixed from the first at a reasonable sum, one that should normally be liqui-

dated in not more than twenty-five years, or a human generation. From this total, the value of all confiscated German property is deducted. The balance is paid by the Germans, preferably in goods on private order, as soon or as late as they see fit to ransom their occupied territories.

Until the last pfennig has been paid, Germany remains "disarmed." With the receipt for the last payment the country acquires the right to re-arm within a scheme of general disarmament.

In my peace treaty there is no mention of specific war guilt. Instead the nations sign a general repudiation of the war as a common crime whose authors, wherever they may be discovered, are sure to bear the stigma of future generations. This avoids allowing the feeling of injustice, natural to beaten countries, to turn inward and fester.

There is no amputation of East Prussia, no Polish Corridor or Free City of Danzig. Poland is reconstituted with the port of Memel, on the periphery of Germanism, and a strip of what is now Lithuania. Later, Poland indignantly refused the suggestion of such an exchange. In 1919 the Poles would have had to make the best of it.

Upper Silesia, as a unit, is made autonomous and placed under the supervision of the League of Nations.

German Tyrol as far south as Salurn, on the language frontier, remains Austrian. Italy takes only the Italian-speaking part.

So soon as Germany enters the League of Nations, it receives its colonies back in the form of mandates.

This answers the argument about "a people with no space" that plays so large a part in subsequent lamentations.

Such an arrangement would have secured for France at least as much money and security as under the Treaty of Versailles; and it would have done so without 1) preparing an eventual war between Germany and Poland; 2) throwing desperate Germany into the arms of the Soviets, whose support was necessary to a war of revenge against the French constellation of States; 3) spreading economic confusion; or 4) exasperating German self-love and hopelessness to the point of blackest reaction, since the door to national equality and freedom was at all times visible.

I think that in a decade Germany would have paid the entire sum, that the relations with France would have improved from year to year, and that the strong Franco-German partnership essential to the stability or even to the existence of a prosperous European continent would be half cemented.

Instead of which, chaos, hatred, reaction, economic nationalism, suicidal insanity. Thanks in part to the Allied and Associated statesmen with their "stupid, inhuman and impracticable peace, which no self-respecting nation in the world would accept for longer than the time and strength it takes to break it."

Yet inept as their behavior was, that of the first German Republican rulers was if anything worse. Let us admit that the Communists rendered the task of establishing a democratic Republic difficult. They cannot excuse the appeal for help to the old Army, the timidity towards the former rulers, the democratic

ineptitude. Republican historians of some future day may have a curious tale to tell of the first Republicans who managed to throw away nearly full power in so few years.

What should they have done? What must any new régime do that comes to power by revolution? Occupy the key positions within the State, of course. Place its own people in all positions of responsibility or control, eliminate, bribe, fetter and even gag its potential opponents at least until it has definitely solidified its own position. Wipe out dangerous traces of the past. Destroy former symbols and substitute new ones for them. Embark upon a vast campaign of education to make clear to the people the evils of the old and the benefits of the new. A revolution must be a break with tradition. In Germany the Republicans themselves left intact a bridge over which the old figures came streaming into the present so soon as they realized they had nothing to fear.

What would such a program have meant to Germany? It would have meant the immediate creation of a Republican Guard from the democratic fragments of the old Army—an easy task. The ruthless elimination from the bureaucracy, the law courts, the schools and the universities of all persons who could not accept the Republic in their hearts. Such persons, once removed, should have received pensions only so long as they abstained from anti-Republican activity. At the least hostile word or deed their pensions should have been forfeit.

It would have meant the deposition of the ruling sovereigns with complete confiscation of their property. A modest pension should then have been paid,

subject to the same conditions as for the retired state officials. Then the complete abolition of titles of nobility with penalty for their further use, the elimination of particles like "*von*" and "*zu*" that betokened the claim to special origin and privilege.

It would have required the temporary veto of any openly monarchical or Communist movements for, say, the first ten years of the Republic. It would have cleared the former nobility out of the diplomatic service save in cases of proven democrats.

Necessary as well would have been the rewriting of the school books with the elimination of the feudal spirit and the servile adulation of the former princes. Instead the new textbooks would have insisted on the responsibility of the Imperial statesmen for the lost war and its terrible consequences, thus driving a wedge between the permanent Germany, the people, and a transitory group of rulers. They would have stigmatized servility and exalted individual freedom, thus dulling the radiance of Prussianism.

And since the spirit of greed lodges easily in a republic, special laws should have been provided for the severe punishment of commercial and political corruption among the rich and highly placed, while the common misdeeds of the poor, such as petty larceny, should have been dealt with mildly as the normal outcome of misery and mis-education.

And finally, the Republic should have instituted a number of public spectacles and holidays in its own honor, and not stinted money on making them popular. It should have rewarded distinguished service with high-sounding republican titles, publicly

martyred whatever political dead it might have, and honored its own leaders under all circumstances.

Such a Republic, however narrow in original base, might have hoped to gain in both popularity and strength from year to year. And instead?

Imagine a virgin republic that appeals to old-time monarchists and generals to defend it against naughty Communists! Inevitably it falls into the enemy's hands. Inevitably the generals continue for the next ten or twenty years to constitute a State within a State, a Mephisto from which—as later developments showed only too well—no power can hope to deliver unhappy Faust. When a portion of the Army joined up with a few adventurers and mutinied in 1920, just eight months after the signing of the Weimar Constitution, only the courageous action of the trade unions could save the State.

Imagine a republic that allows its laws to be interpreted by monarchist judges, its Government to be administered by old-time functionaries brought up in fidelity to the old régime; that watches passively while reactionary school teachers and professors teach its children to despise the present freedom in favor of a glorified feudal past; that permits and encourages the revival of the militarism that was chiefly responsible for the country's previous humiliation!

What can be said for democrats who subsidize ex-princes who attack the régime; who make their exiled ex-emperor their richest man in deference to supposed property rights; who abolish titles of nobility only to incorporate them into the substance of the legal name? Thus William II's name legally became

William Prince of Prussia, his son's legal appellation, Frederick William Prince of Prussia, and the son's wife, Mrs. Cäcilie Prince of Prussia.

This remarkable Republic paid generous pensions to thousands of ex-officers and civil servants who made no bones of their desire to overthrow it. It allowed members of deposed ruling families publicly to ally themselves with anti-Republican Fascists. It tolerated the presence of a whole group of semi-military organizations, Private Armies in the literal sense, Steel Helmet, Werewolf, Viking Band, Hitler Storm Battalions, Communist Red Front, under the pretext that excepting the Communists they all were "patriotic" and furthered the military spirit; it put purely republican defensive organizations, the *Reichsbanner* and the Iron Front, legally on the same basis with the anti-Republican bands. It permitted the ex-nobility to cluster thickly in the upper ranks of the anything but republican army and navy; it allowed them to hold key positions in the diplomatic service abroad where some of them have thought nothing of slighting visiting German Republicans before the eyes of strangers. It hedged on the question of its own flag and shared the honors with a "commercial flag" closely copied from the Imperial Ensign. And it encouraged a good-natured people to howl for a foreign policy of immediate treaty revision as its "unanimous demand." This active policy was largely responsible for the financial debacle of July, 1931 and has cost the country many times any material benefits to be obtained from it. At a period when millions of unemployed Germans had barely enough to keep them alive! Worse, this revisionist

policy was thought to require and justify petty treaty violation: to maintain the necessary secrecy, literally hundreds of "traitors" who protested were given heavy sentences.

But what need further to seek the causes of the German reaction? One need merely accept the judgment of the ex-King of Saxony on the crowd that cheered him in the station of his former capital: "*You are a lot of red-hot Republicans!*"

Thanks to a bad peace treaty the German people logically became nationalistic. That they reverted to their traditional submissiveness to natural autocrats was almost exclusively due to supine passivity of the Republican rulers in allowing their State to be flouted and derided with impunity by generals, ex-sovereigns, nobles, judges, officials and sturdy adventurers.

All because Clemenceau was a vindictive patriot, Wilson an ignorant moralist, Lloyd George a weak politician, and the German Republicans suffered from an inferiority complex.

CHAPTER III

AGAINST ALL REASON

ESTIMATED on the basis of the elections of April, 1932, three Germans out of every four had come to repudiate the Liberal Republic—thirteen years after the foundation of the “most democratic state in the world.” This repudiation was the basis of the German reaction, a movement masked chiefly by the fact that its opponents were united by nothing unless by their repudiation of rational thought. For in German eyes, Liberal Republic and the supremacy of human reason had become practically identical.

Fourteen million reactionary Nationalists deplored its democracy. They were homesick for despotism, demagogic or paternalistic. They thought with their “blood.” Eleven and a half million followers of Karl Marx—the Social-Democrats and Communists—were agreed in abhorring the Republic’s tolerance of capitalism. Their thoughts came from their bellies. Five million Catholics opposed its religious indifference and moral tolerance. They thought with their consciences. That the Social-Democrats and Catholics still sought to defend this Republic against its blatant enemies was an irony of history: they feared something worse, for they were the two groups who had been considered by Bismarck the enemies of his Empire, and treated accordingly.

This imposing mass of opposition to the liberalism of the German Republic was, to foreigners, the more quaintly paradoxical, since in their eyes, the German Republic had hardly been liberal at all.

In economics, in politics, Germany never really accepted liberalism. The ascendancy of despotic Prussia prevented that. Back in the eighteen-forties the economist Frederick List advocated "national economy" in opposition to the individualistic liberal "economics" of the other countries. The majority of German theorists as well as practitioners have steadily opposed individual freedom in business. What economic liberalism existed under the Republic never surpassed a pseudo-capitalism, based on State interference, obligatory insurance, subsidies, monopolies, labor organizations and relatively fixed wages and prices. All in all, it was an approach to "planned economy," that had little in common with Occidental liberalism.

Politically, Imperial Germany was an anachronism: a great people allowed its political passivity to be systematically exploited by a feudal nobility and an absolutistic bureaucracy, or so it seemed to Westerners. Few Germans, however, agreed with this diagnosis; or if they did, they claimed a right to be "particular." Certainly they never dreamed of admitting that Western democracy constituted something absolutely higher than their own class paternalism. Allied war propaganda based on this supposition, must have struck them as outrageous presumption or sheer humor. For most cultured Germans are so primed with historical relativity that they deny the existence of any "absolutely" higher forms. Each

people, they believe, has a right to its own peculiar culture, and no one of them can be ranked "above" another; they are merely different.

The most remarkable feature of the Liberal German Republic was the scarcity of Liberal Republicans.

Which is merely a way of saying that Germany belonged only with about half of its soul and a third of its territory to the Occidental world.

Liberalism, according to the Socialists and Communists, allowed the unrestrained development of an anarchical economic system that was the opposite of true democracy. Liberalism, complained the Catholics, was a Godless, sinfully tolerant, falsely founded state of society. Liberalism, thundered the Nationalists, was pacifist, internationalist, plutocratic, individualistic, unsocial and un-German. Practically all the critics of liberalism united in desiring to substitute for the present pseudo-capitalism a thorough-going planned economy.

Furthermore, to the reactionaries of all sorts, liberalism, wherever applied, seemed to produce a nation, not of heroes, but of middle-class business men and motor-mad Babbitts, living in feeble tolerance. Instead of which they wanted a mystical, authoritative State with bureaucrats to define right and wrong, and a public opinion that would honor the soldier and the state official, and not the politician and merchant and banker.

Back of this preference, as was fitting in the country of "poets and philosophers," lay a historical development. The Germans are fundamentally "lower middle class." In nearly every Teuton, however elegant or distinguished his manner of life, there is a

fundamental hankering back to the easy comfort of the *Wohnküche*—the kitchen stove and shirt sleeves and simplicity. Therefore being born Babbitts—their own name for them is “Philistines”—they have frequently developed an “anti-type” that despised these. The greatest was Frederick Nietzsche, apostle of the super-man. Nietzsche taught a picked group of his countrymen the virtue of “living dangerously.”

There was nothing very new in this; in more heroic Renaissance days a Venetian poetess, Gaspara Stampa, had uttered an appeal to “live like a flame and be numb to evil.” But to the Victorian seventies and eighties Nietzsche’s war cry rang like a trombone.

About the time Nietzsche’s influence began to be felt, a remarkable book, *Rembrandt as Educator*, appeared from the at first anonymous pen of Otto Julius Langbehn. Langbehn was what is commonly termed a “queer fish,” who managed to drape the details of his life in a *chiaroscuro* that not even the sleuthiest biographers have been able to pierce. In Rembrandt, an aesthetic, heroic figure, he saw the deepest characteristics of the Germanic race and in Rembrandt’s name he called his countrymen from the superficial life of positivist reason and utilitarian science back to art and personality. “The strong is strongest when alone,” he wrote. This meant for him aristocracy in the best sense of the word. An aristocracy founded on no underestimation of German virtues. For “a proper German is a proper man.”

This second appeal added strength to the romantic movement that eventually led to the outspoken anti-industrialism and anti-middle-class conceptions of the famous “Youth Movement.”

Nearly every tourist in Germany a few years ago met, somewhere or other, on some lonely mountain, marching along a country road, in a corner of a village tavern, a group of young people of both sexes. Their head and legs were bare and brown, they wore "arty" clothing of cheap material, they carried lutes and mandolins with well-stuffed rucksacks. Their occupation was "wandering" through the countryside, their pleasure music and nature, their aim a new and heroic soul. They constituted the Youth Movement. There were as many groups of them as German creeds, but somehow they were united by a common desire for a truly national "community of interests" (*Volksgemeinschaft*), as against the artificial community of civilization. They hated everything that separates men, money grubbing, meanness, social stuffiness, standardization, mechanized industry. Their myths were not the democratic aspirations of 1848, but the romantic notions of an elder past, an age of Minnesingers, craftsmen, artists, warriors.

Then the war was lost, the rational Republic was installed, the middle class (from which they mostly came) stripped bare by currency inflation. The Youth Movement frittered away into political groups and left a residuum of long haired and bearded "nature people" with fuzzy chests; but its spiritual influence remained.

Always and primarily, this spirit was Germanic—it insisted on particularly national characteristics as against generally "human" or cosmopolitan standards. Now the Weimar Republic can not be said to have emerged from the turgid depths of the Teutonic soul; quite clearly its chief characteristics were im-

ported from abroad—parliamentary democracy, some liberalism, individualism. Therefore, for the consciously Teutonic, it constituted a violation of German, particularly of Prussian Tradition. Whereas foreigners wondered that the Western spirit was so sparingly incorporated into the new Republic, most Germans apparently opposed its ever being imported at all.

The new State was doctrinaire, its institutions ultra-democratic, its supporters too few and inexperienced, its voters untrained to civic responsibility and accustomed to leave politics and leadership to their betters, the ruling aristocracy and officials. It lacked competent leaders. It was shot through and through with more or less hidden hatred and obstructionism on the part of the probably non-democratic majority. It tended towards anonymity. Its citizens were asked to choose not persons, but parties, each party with a list of generally unknown candidates who owed their candidacy to their control of the party machine. Big interests, the heavy industry, the trade unions, the Catholic church, the large landowners, the saloon-keepers and artisans were quick to take advantage of this. They refused to co-operate and their egoism was crude. In the year 1930, in a moment of national crisis, Finance Minister Dietrich bluntly told the Deputies that their vote would reveal whether the Germans were "a people or a pile of vested interests." Unimpressed, the Deputies decided for the latter! In a word, the Republic, unwelcome in origin, undermined by opposition and criticism, handicapped by inexperience, lack of tradition and a complicated mechanism understood only by professional politi-

cians and officials, worked perhaps a little worse than the governments of Western democracies. To Germans the imperfections seemed monstrous. For anything further from the Romantic semi-medievalism of the Youth Movement, with its insistence on mystic feeling, its dislike of rational conceptions whether in social life or politics or business, would be hard to imagine.

Therefore to a fundamental philosophical distrust of the Republic there was added the hatred of the impoverished middle class and gradually the opposition of youth. Nothing born of humiliation can ever be welcome and the Republic was the child of defeat. Somehow it became identified with defeat, with national impotence, private greed, political ineptitude and the moral corruption born of every great war.

Meanwhile there had been growing up in Germany a new attitude—the revolt against reason itself.

To the outside world Germany seems the country of organized science. But equally it is the country of rampant superstition. This people is rich in intellect, poor in common sense. It radiates intelligence, yet its several minds are open to the cosmic night. Through the openings drift in thousands of useful inventions and great ideas, fairy tales, philosophies, and, perhaps even more, fads and follies, distorted bat-like fancies, illusions, madnesses. It is essentially chaotic, illogical and romantic. It is ill-defined in its being, hospitable to novelty, paradoxical. It is a country where men are continually flying to extremes that meet again at the end of some unexpected rainbow. Everything you say of such people must

promptly be completed by its opposite. No wonder the philosopher Hegel, who knew no other country, conceived the world-process as thesis—anti-thesis—synthesis.

This is the land of industry and of lyrical poetry. It boasts of "realism" (*Sachlichkeit*). Yet beside its preoccupation with real science there is an equal interest in such subjects as "characterology," or the attempt to class men into fixed types; as geopolitics, or the belief in the supreme historical importance of geography; as astrology, or the belief that the answers to our uncertainties are written in the stars where all (initiates) may read; as graphology, or the trust in handwriting as a primary and legible expression of personality. Beside its marvelous historians are a whole group of enthusiasts passionate about alleged "racial knowledge."

The clear Latin logic that bears the name of Descartes, the sober English common sense of Locke and Hume and John Stuart Mill, the positivism of Comte and Herbert Spencer and most nineteenth-century scientists were, rightly or wrongly, merely an iron collar to the Germans, who escaped from them as quickly as possible into that peculiar subjectivity in which alone they feel comfortable.

In other words, in thought as in politics, this people is formless and therefore craves a form so strong that it cannot be broken. Since the Germans have never formed an inwardly coherent nation, since what political cohesion they have possessed has always been imposed from without, they simply cannot tolerate tolerance or the purely intellectual limits

of reason. For, according to A. N. Whitehead, "Faith in reason . . . is the faith that at the basis of things we shall not find mere arbitrary mystery."

Now in their essence, belief in human rights, liberty, equality, fraternity, the justice of liberal economics, tolerance, are as mystical as any buried Barbarossa, but they seem more sensible. The average German learned to identify reason with common sense and common sense with liberalism. Which was an additional, if generally subconscious ground for opposing the last.

The great novelist Thomas Mann has publicly but vainly protested against the cult of emotion and irrationality that had laid hold of the German brain. Thinking with one's blood became steadily more popular. For thus the yoke of hard fact could be lifted and subjective aspiration take wing.

Liberals, it appears, were possessed of a relentless demon, and woe to the poor German who even consented to argue with a Liberal. "Whoever fights (liberalism) with its own weapons has become liberal." (Hans Zehrer, *Die Tat*, October 1931.) In other words, stop your followers' ears with wax and have them lash you to the mast before you subject your poor self to the singing of the siren, Reason.

Another form of reason is money; in this atmosphere the two were often identified: "The last fight begins through which civilization receives its final form; the fight of blood against money." (Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*.)

That the human mind was emerging from the canyon of ill-conceived mechanistic rationality there could be no doubt. Positivism in any form had come

to lack illustrious philosophic defenders and materialistic scientists were finding it increasingly difficult to hold out against those who insisted on the validity of integral experience. But this was still a long way from hysteria and the ancestor-worship (authority of "blood") that swept over the Germans.

The old Germany collapsed in 1918; the Germany of 1932 was unhappy. Therefore in the ruins of old beliefs, in the labyrinth of its great and tortured mind, it sought for a future that would somehow satisfy its belief in its own capacity and importance. Yet since it was unable to conceive a future independent of an idealized tradition, its historical anticipation took the form of a mighty reaction.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW NATIONALISM

ONCE, beside Lake Ochrida, a mule driver gave me a lesson in politics. The Albanians, he said, are the world's greatest people, for "we conquered the earth for Alexander the Great." Since then I have tried never to forget that each people is, to itself, incomparable.

As "God's own," we Americans can never doubt of our peculiar mission. And if we did, certain verses by Walt Whitman would recall us to the divine reality. The calm self-esteem of the English, their assumption of their right to govern the earth, provokes the patience of less favored nations. "French" and "nationalistic" (not, mind you, militaristic or imperialistic) often seem interchangeable adjectives.

But German self-esteem has always had a peculiar color. Not only in pardonably expansive moments, over a third glass of wine or on the candidate's platform, do the Germans proclaim their right to the leading rôle in the concert of peoples. They have a half-coherent philosophy, a systematic teaching concerning their world mission. And, normally enough, this mission finds acceptance in all circles, whether of democrats or aristocrats, cosmopolitans or narrow-browed jingos. From about 1929, it became more and more popular in its chauvinistic, reactionary version.

The practically inevitable result of the Treaty of Versailles, a document that humiliated and hindered without really crippling an over-ambitious people.

This philosophy is fundamentally a doctrine of predestination. In the time of Napoleon, "the German soul, not wishing to die, decided in an immense religious wave, that it was grounded in the eternal." (Charles Andler.)

Its doctrine began with Fichte, who somewhat strangely ranks in Germany as a Liberal. Not even so wise a soul as Schiller escaped. In the notes for an unfinished poem, "German Greatness," he naïvely announces that "every people has its historic day, but the day of the German is the day of harvest."

From then on, successive German prophets sought to overbid each other in their contribution to Germany's predestined glory. Highly important was the philosopher Hegel, who began his career in the shadow of Fichte. This insignificant looking prophet was originally politically indifferent and obscure. His lectures at Heidelberg (1812) were at one time attended by precisely four sleepy students. The professor was a miserable speaker, who fumbled his notes, rarely raised his head from his papers and coughed constantly while he talked. Yet he eventually became a popular figure. No wonder, for in his *Philosophy of History* he advanced the agreeable thesis that humanity had finally come to manhood in the Germanic race.

The notion of the Germans as a "people of lords" (*Herrenvolk*) properly contemptuous of Jews and other less lordly stocks was beautifully expressed by Paul Anton de Lagarde, the Orientalist. It is notable

that aristocracy and Prussianism have been most fervently worshiped in Germany by middle-class devotees. For although Lagarde wrote that "wherever the Germans arrived they brought inward aristocracy with them, for they were of a royal turn of mind," this did not prevent him personally from discarding the eminently German name of Bötticher he inherited from his father in favor of the foreign yet high sounding "De Lagarde" borne by his mother.

The next element was introduced by the Frenchman, Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, through Richard Wagner and Richard Wagner's son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. This was the "discovery" of the historical superiority of the Nordic race. In his imposing *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Chamberlain actually devoted a dozen pages to the frantic effort to prove Jesus was not a Jew. Bayreuth under Wagner was full of consecrated Nordicism. Even in 1924, when the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth was re-established by international cooperation, after a lapse of several years, the first performances were ushered in by violent national crowing.

Add a heavy dose of Nietzsche, an injection of Langbehn, a large amount of pseudo-history and economic imperialism, and the mentality that awaited a German "world empire" as the inevitable outcome of the war is explained.

Pre-war Germany was as free from doubt or uncertainty as any place in the world. The established order was more than well founded—it was God-given. This tenet was inculcated by the churches and accepted in practice.

The war hardly shook this belief. The entire population obediently swallowed the official version of war origins and with a degree of equanimity almost inconceivable in less highly disciplined countries, set out to defend their homes against French revenge, English envy and Russian barbarism. A certain spirit of social reform developed among the young people in the trenches, but on the whole the mass of the people accepted their lot without comment or resentment. This war, like others, was part of the Divine Plan for German glory and hardly aroused a flicker of resistance.

Then, within a few weeks, everything collapsed. Sovereign and social order disappeared; "no more Army, no more ruling class, no more government." Invisibly yet nonetheless surely, everything that happened in post-war Germany for many years was influenced by the outwardly so orderly revolution.

But the dream of political pre-eminence disappeared only to revive almost immediately. The "Third Empire" became symbolical of all the aspirations of young German nationalism.

Moeller van den Bruck, the author of an emotional volume with this title, pointed, on the whole, to the future as the place where Germany's greatness would be located. Oswald Spengler recalled the attention of young Germany to its past. In a pamphlet, *Prussianism and Socialism*, he redirected public opinion to the supreme virtues of historical Prussia. While another work, *Mankind and Technique*, was devoted to convincing his countrymen that man is a carnivorous animal; that to such beasts as we, eternal peace would be like the intolerable boredom (*tædium vitæ*) of

Imperial Rome, and that pacifism, "as Montaigne and Nietzsche knew," is a silly dream.

Such publications went far to explain the brawling of post-war Germany. For thanks to political pressure from abroad, economic pressure from within and a universal decay of values, young Germans gradually flocked back to the older type of chauvinism.

The entire world found itself in a crisis of disbelief: disbelief in the established social order, in that "middle-class" democracy of the West which the revolutionaries sought to introduce into Germany; disbelief in the economic order of individualistic capitalism—reputed contrary to the German spirit; disbelief in "middle-class" moral standards, especially in matters of sex; disbelief in older values such as thriftiness, diligence, respectability, even property-owning; disbelief in any absolute scale of values whatsoever—everything being either historically or socially or economically conditioned; disbelief in real progress; and finally disbelief in the ability of the human reason to make anything coherent out of the muddle that is life.

Such a wholesale collapse of established values produced an unbreathable atmosphere. A crisis of civilization, plus a national crisis, plus a crisis of getting a living!

The young people reacted by an inner transformation. Spiritually orphaned in childhood, they had to come to terms with life unassisted. Therefore their virtues became so to speak, biological, for before their eyes, the ideals that their elder brothers and sisters had possessed ten years before—the dream of a better, freer, fairer society, exempt from the threat

of war—were being systematically denied, it seemed to them, by the rulers of the earth. Therefore, all ideals, even ideas, were presumed a fraud. The world, they decided, is ruled by hard facts. Of these facts, the hardest of all is power. There are no super-national values, and if there were, they would only be dangerous for a conquered people that must not be distracted from the primary task of recovering its power and prestige. "Germany can not consent to remain a second-class nation!" The foreigners preferred democracy in Germany simply because democracy makes for weakness. Since the only way to freedom lies in strength and strength implies an armed people, militarism must be encouraged and democracy must go. Within the single nation one might hope to find that social link which incurable idealists sought in vain within humanity or the commonwealth of nations. So ran the thesis of the disillusioned.

A volume, *Aufstand (Insurrection)*, a symposium published in 1931 by young German Nationalists of various shades but of a common color, provided the desired evidence. This volume was for a time forbidden in Prussia; its importance lay in the fact that it could have been written at all. Some of its authors had been heard of before, others were new, or so I believe, some were Roman Catholics, some Protestants, some free-thinkers.

The editor, Goetz Otto Stoffregen, sounded the key in the first of these short contributions. The Republic was, of course, inwardly dead (for him and his friends). In its stead rose the picture of the coming German State, not yet precise, but sufficiently clear to such sharp eyes as his. The new State, he wrote, would

be "national," it would be "social"; it would be capable of defending itself and it would be founded on authority. Translate these Teutonic euphemisms into a plainer speech and the picture becomes clear indeed. In the dreams of these young ultra-patriots, the new Germany was to be intolerantly nationalistic, more or less socialistic in tone, militaristic in spirit and despotic in form, not altogether unlike the Fatherland of 1914.

Hanns Henning Grote, a baron by birth, was interested in the antithesis between German Nationalism and Occidental liberalism. Important for us are two small sentences, typical of the amount of arrogance that can be induced by impotent national *amour propre*: "If Germany goes down, the European Christian world will go down with it. Not today or tomorrow but in the time of our children and grandchildren."

"The nation," wrote our next specimen, Franz Schauwecker, "enjoys a direct and very deep unity with God." Some people, even Germans like Thomas Mann, it seemed, made the mistake of loving humanity instead of their nation, in imitation of the Occident. "What is the Occident?" you who have not heard, ask. It is "the most naked materialism in the world." Yet this materialism had been allowed to defile the temples of spiritual-minded Germany, under the Republic, of course. "Everything recognized today in German politics, newspapers, theater, painting, moving pictures, criticism, is foreign, is un-German, is hostile." This was particularly reprehensible since, though you may not have known it, Germany is not just Germany. Germany is not a

geographical expression. "There is Germany in the Flemish soul, Germany in the novels of Cervantes, Germany in the dramas of Shakespeare . . . Germany is the center of the world and the world cannot exist without Germany. . . . Germany is the kingdom of God."

This kind of school-boy poem was unintentionally characterized by a sentence from our next "author," Hanns Johst, in a contribution called *Concerning the Dangers*: "The stream into our ranks is greater than our mental clarity," he wrote. It could not have been better said.

Friedrich Hielscher set out to describe the nature of the German during the last two thousand years in terms that might have been lifted from some masterpiece of anti-German war propaganda. "Our (German) inwardness contains the will to power and our power the will to inwardness." The great Germans, it appears, have all been crafty fellows. The Emperor Theodoric was, for instance, not only the best spear thrower and warrior of his time but the most cunning statesman. He regularly betrayed all those with whom he made alliances! "The Teuton has at all times been slyer than his opponent, and the harmless honesty which the fat citizen takes for German fidelity has as little to do with our nature as the nature of a lap-dog with the character of a wolf."

The same with Emperor Henry VI: "He scorns no means, for he knows but one aim, the power of the Empire." After which the reader is hardly surprised to learn that "Prussia is not a people (*Stamm*) but an order of things. One becomes Prussian by choice." How different from the shopkeeping Western nations

whose lust is purely for material possession. "William II was a westerner." Heaven forbid! But the "recreation and transformation (of the earth) is the work of the (German) grey army." Amen!

Friedrich Wilhelm Heinz went even further in frankness. Most of his collaborators stopped with the exaltation of their fathers and themselves. Heinz realized that the benefits of Germanism must, willy nilly, be extended to other nations. "The mission of most peoples stops with the nation." But the German task is to realize (or revive) "the Empire" (*das Reich*). "Politically it is the task of the German nation to shape and secure the space between Flanders (in Belgium) and Burgundy (in France), between Siebenbürgen (in Hungary) and Dorpat (in Estonia) and while preserving the racial peculiarity of their population to fit into the political and economic power zone of Germany, those eastern and southern parts of Europe whose peoples are not adapted to becoming nations. It is the task of the Empire to transfer the rule to the bearers of a Germanism that is bound to no nation, no people and no race. . . . Only the German people is called to rule the earth." A little hard on Poles, Russians and Balkan peoples who are "not adapted to becoming nations," and on mere Frenchmen, Englishmen and Americans who are not "called to rule the earth." But what can they expect? "When the star of chaos . . . begins to dance over Europe, then the hour has come to build up the Empire, against the Occident, against Rome, and marked off clearly from the bolshevik system of Russia."

Such innocent self-exposure leaves little taste for

further quotation. Worthy of note, however, is the further fact that several of these writers took it for granted that the appropriate tools for empire building are weapons. Thus Hans Schwarz van Berk casually remarked that "a coming (German?) war for space and employment" would have to take the character of an insurrection. "Its preparation must be invisible and it must be started without formalities," no declaration of war, no warning. It is quite in the line of clever Theodoric and of that sly emperor, Henry VI, who scorned no means.

Admitted, such a volume is both silly and hysterical—mental age ten years, quite in the well-known vein: "My papa is taller than your papa because my papa is as tall as the sky." But that such "new nationalism," as they called it, should be the admitted ideal of literate human beings even in the Year of Folly, 1932, was no laughing matter. For these young men did not speak for themselves alone. They invented nothing, not even a new form of boasting. Their ideas they took from the world around them, from their books, their families, their teachers, their associates, and developed them with the honest ruthlessness of youth. Here lay the pity and the significance of a book like this.

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CHAPTER V

BACK TO PRUSSIANISM

TO FOREIGN countries, the most significant of the many slogans that resounded throughout reactionary Germany, was "Back to Prussianism!" For it was antipathy to Prussianism that aroused practically the entire liberal world against William of Hohenzollern.

Prussianism derives from Prussia.

Since its tardy entrance into history, Prussia has been the prototype of a military autocracy. For the present purpose its history can essentially be summarized as follows:

In the year 1226 the Polish Duke, Conrad of Masovia, invited the Order of Teutonic Knights to help him fight against some very tough Heathen who lived in what is now East Prussia. The Knights came, conquered the Heathen (and largely exterminated them, according to a most Christian custom), but liked the country and decided to stay. The Poles protested and eventually got most of the territory back. But in the meantime it had been colonized by German merchants and peasants, who mixed with the remaining natives and Slavs to form part of what is now the Prussian race. Thus Prussia was literally a colony of the rest of Germany.

Second date: In 1660, by the Peace of Oliva, the

Great Elector of Brandenburg secured international recognition of his sovereignty over East Prussia.

This is his historic title to greatness. But from an essentially Prussian viewpoint, he was greater because he created a standing army.

Next important event: Frederick William I raised the standing army from 40,000 to 80,000, and "first gave Prussia the characteristic stamp of a military and bureaucratic state." (*Encyclopædia Britannica.*)

Frederick the Great's widened State was "recognized as a Great Power," and at the opening of the Seven Years' War (1756) he possessed an army consisting of about one-seventh of all the able-bodied men in his little kingdom. But his true eminence lies elsewhere: into the sandy waste that formed most of his father's realm he introduced, in 1738, the cultivation of the humble potato, thanks to which the soil could nourish a population large enough to maintain itself as a Great Power.

At Offenburg in Baden there is a monument raised by the inhabitants to "Sir Francis Drake, introducer of the potato into Europe in the year of our Lord, 1580." This monument, magnified ten times, ought rightfully to stand in Berlin on the spot now occupied by the "Victory Column" that celebrates Prussia's victory over France in 1870-71. For without Drake—or at least, without the potato—there would have been no victory over France, for the reason there could not have been enough Pomeranian Grenadiers to struggle against a populous country.

Thanks, therefore, to the potato and to the military prowess of its potato-growing nobility, the Prussian or colonial part of the country could conquer and

maintain an ascendancy over the more civilized but politically less coherent portions from which the colonists originally came. In the course of the nineteenth century, Prussia's expansion resulted in the inoculation of most of the country with what is called Prussianism.

What is this Prussianism to which so many post-war Germans aspired to return? It all depends upon whom you ask. There has been endless discussion both in Germany and abroad.

In its simplest form, Prussianism is blind submission. It is a philosophy of a military Order that sought primarily to maintain its position against the possible revolt of the conquered. It is the spirit of an army carried over into a bureaucracy and into society itself. It is the predominance of a single will—leadership in the narrowest sense. Therefore it is a cult of efficiency, chiefly efficiency of a military type. It is the consecration of social privilege. It is a class society, that when some sort of election became necessary, managed to maintain itself on a "three-class franchise" which aimed openly at the maintenance of a feudal plutocracy. It is to divide a people into "masters" and "men" and to assume that the former are divinely intended to rule over the latter. It is standardized discipline—and servility.

Now this military feudalism, however suited to a handful of Germanic knights who wanted to maintain themselves against a largely "hostile" foreign population, was clearly too primitive to be transplanted to regions where there had existed a cultural tradition for about a thousand years.

Yet with the rise of Prussia to predominance—the

predominance of conquest—the spread of Prussianism was inevitable, but in a refined, palatable form. The simple “master-man” complex that nourished the Eastern Marches would have seemed like raw meat in Augsburg, Stuttgart or Frankfurt-on-the-Main.

This refining process was again the work of the South German philosopher, George William Frederick Hegel, without whose influence contemporary Germany is unthinkable. This pedant of genius has had perhaps greater influence on modern politics than any other individual, since he was the father of religious nationalism and the grandfather of so-called scientific socialism. He found in Prussia the model for the metaphysical state he dreamed of and set about making Prussianism palatable to civilized people.

The Prussian system, whatever its virtues in preserving “peace and order,” imposed great hardships on developed individuals. The question might arise whether the benefits were worth all this sacrifice of personal freedom and normal rights. Hegel answered the question by lifting it to the plane of religion. The State is not the common garden-variety, common-sense institution Westerners imagine. The State—the creation of strong-armed “world-historical” individuals (Carlyle’s heroes)—is nothing less than the objectivation of the World Spirit, or Absolute. When the concrete king of Prussia received the concrete benefits of his concrete rule from his obedient subjects, not he but the Absolute really enjoyed them. Dissenters of less than “world historical dimensions” were rebels against God, while those who cheerfully

did their duty to the State were partners of the World Spirit. Surely none but petty souls could fail to be lifted up by such a thought.

Common individuals, according to Hegel, achieve their only significance and dignity by the manner and degree to which they serve the State. Therefore a postman is really "superior" to a millionaire merchant: the latter may be facilitating the material life of thousands, but the former walks within the radiance of the World Spirit. The State is the center and meaning.

So much for the fact of Prussianism.

Now to Prussianism as its enemies see it.

Ask a foreign visitor to pre-war Germany for his notions of Prussianism and he will generally answer with indignation. To him Prussianism was primarily militarism. It was a society that made the soldier the supreme social type and honored him as the highest of the State servants. It was the insolent spirit of the aristocratic landowner or *Junker*, who paid for his social privileges and (practically) State-guaranteed income by service to his king and country, and whose tenants revealed their social debasement by a habit (still preserved in a few districts) of kissing the lordly hand.

It was organized arrogance and servility.

Its chief sin, however, was a fundamental and philosophical minimizing of the individual and his rights for the sake of national myths and the privileges of an oligarch. To the Western world, the partial elimination of Prussianism was the chief benefit of the German revolution.

Obviously enough, when the young Germans later

aspired back to Prussianism, it was not primarily out of a lust for war or a perverse desire to kowtow and be kicked. It was because they had been taught to see in old Prussia a model of political splendor and the incarnation of all that the democratic Republic lacked.

“Breeding, order, service to society, iron discipline, unconditional authority, political leadership, a strong army, a solid, incorruptible bureaucracy, national prosperity produced by the tenacious energy of its inhabitants and the iron thrift of its princes, popular Christian and patriotic education, and beside the individual’s attachment to law, a generosity of spirit, a liberalism of opinion, a religious tolerance found nowhere else—that together is Prussia.”

This enthusiastic description, by the National-Socialist leader, Joseph Goebbels (*Voelkischer Beobachter*, April 14, 1932), goes far to explain the accompanying clamor for a return to Prussian ideals.

Unquestionably, a good deal of this admiration was due to the most blatant of myths. Every national history, as taught to the young and the ignorant, inculcates symbolic stories with the purpose of stimulating patriotic fervor. In Prussia they were no different than in Boston or Bordeaux—and could stand the light of investigation about as well.

There was the myth of Prussian religious reverence. In point of fact, the Prussian bureaucracy since the time of Frederick the Great had been largely composed of free-thinkers.

The spirit of resistance, thanks to which Germany eventually recovered from the dominion of Napoleon, was popularly considered to be a Prussian gift. Really, the Germans who led the fight for national liberty

against the French were not typical Prussians, even when Prussians by birth and nationality. They were representatives of the educated middle class who had imbibed the spirit of the French Revolution and turned it against the Revolution's master—the same circles who rose in 1848 against Prussian absolutism and demanded democratic institutions.

Not even the Prussian "strength of character" was specifically Prussian. Foreign ideas penetrate the reactionary East and North far more quickly and superficially than the liberal South and West.

Inevitably the most unctuous myths centered around the dynasty of the Hohenzollerns. Yet none but pedants gone sycophant could have made out of the great Frederick, the francophile friend of Voltaire, a symbol of Prussianism. For this king, who knew Lessing personally and was familiar with Goethe's reputation, preferred the neat garden of French eighteenth-century rationalism to the forest of German genius. What should we think of a contemporary Prussian statesman who urged South Germans, Frenchmen, and even Poles of German origin to settle in Pomerania in the hope of overcoming the native phlegm by an admixture of foreign blood?

Such myths accounted for a large part of the disparity in judgment between the admirer and detractor of Prussianism. Where the latter heard the bellowing of the drill sergeant and smelled the sour stuffiness of the barracks, the former listened to the stern yet lofty ethics of Kant and Fichte and thought to inhale the promise of national liberty.

For hundreds of years Prussia was an orderly, well-administered State. Not only the Prussian Army: the

Prussian officials as well were in one sense a model administration. Although they looked down upon the mere public with scorn, they looked up to the king and to the State with a marvelous loyalty. Their ethics may not have been—doubtless were not—those of a free people, but they were rigorously observed. The aristocrat, the officer, the official, the professor, might lord it over common mortals but to the State he owed a stern service. After all, the source of the immense prestige and dignity he enjoyed lay not in himself but in the fact that he so directly served the State.

Now it is notable that the State obtained such a remarkable degree of duty from its servants without any appeal to their cupidity. Super-human though they were, the Prussian officer and the Prussian official were poorly paid. Their real recompense lay in the “honor” they enjoyed in being privileged to serve the World Spirit.

Even in the prosperous years after 1870, when so many German families rose to riches, the officials never sought to share in the material benefits. Nor did they need money to play an important social rôle. The officer or higher official was *ipso facto* a superior being, a first-class member of society, whose children might marry in all circles save those of the ruling nobility. Titles were important—all Germans have a weakness for titles—but merely as the outward signs of an inner eminence.

The relationship of the German officials to the State was really idealistic. These people were uncommonly stern and uncompromising, but they spared themselves no less than they spared others. Personally

they were incorruptible. They sought not money but recognition from their semi-divine employer. Promotion or a colored ribbon were the prizes they aimed at. Cases of bribery or other pecuniary failing were almost unknown. On grounds of comparative honesty the Prussian bureaucracy stood second to none.

This honor, this sense of duty, this communion in service to a common cause is what the reactionary young people admired as the "spirit of the front."

Against this memory, idealized by war and distance, there stood the frowzy picture of the revolution and the Republic.

Nothing is more dangerous than the void left by a lost religion. The Republic neglected to offer any satisfactory substitute for the old German spirit it sought to eliminate. No military romance, few parades, no easing of responsibility through discipline, no new Ruling Class with voices of the same treble timbre; nothing but personal liberty and an unwelcome opportunity for each individual to achieve moral and spiritual dignity so far as he is capable of this development.

Service to the State lost its almost sacerdotal quality and became a livelihood like any other. Social contrasts became more brutally obvious. Money played a larger part. Scandals began to burst on all sides. In old Germany the business ethics had been high; under the Republic they dropped to well below the international average. The Socialists were the bitterest critics of Prussianism and saw little good in it. The democratic Republic, though far from socialistic, admittedly incorporated a certain amount of hatred for the old system, and was somewhat lacking in "filial

piety" toward the past. Its ethical basis, as understood in Germany, was unquestionably thinner and more materialistic than that of pre-war Prussia—thinner chiefly because of the demoralizing effects of the war itself, but also owing to the sudden elevation to power of any number of persons, mediocre or worse, who had no share in the old conceptions of duty and honor. More materialistic, since, in the absence of fixed classes, orders, honors, mere material wealth became the measure of success. With the advent to power of the oppressed masses, their starved bodies and minds reached out for the concrete privileges from which they had so long been shut out. In their eyes, the State was a kind of charitable institution with no ethical content whatever. Though the Republic actually did more for the people than had ever been done before, it failed to win their respect, to say nothing of winning their awe. In acquiring greater prosperity, they lost a kind of Divine Being which it was humanly an honor to serve. And when prosperity departed, it took their interest in the Republic with it.

The first to profit from this moral slump was the Nationalist reaction. The bewildered German youth of the crisis years hungered for an ideal. Deprived of material well-being or even normal comfort, with hardly a decent chance of finding proper employment, its natural idealism became heightened to the point of hysteria. There developed a desire for self-sacrifice, for passionate devotion to something beyond and above the petty ideals of daily life. Mostly they missed in the society of their fathers those "ideal chains" which the formlessness inherent in the German character make almost a necessity to the people.

The Republic seemed to them composed exclusively of wrangling greedy egoists. Its only important political units were "parties," each of which sought its own particular advantage at the expense of the others. What a humiliating contrast with the honor and duty-loving old Prussians! That the ruling caste in old Prussia was the worst sort of party, that its members were generally banded together in life and death for the preservation of their very concrete personal privileges, these youthful idealists either did not know or dared not admit.

But as prophets began to arise to damn democracy and the new Elijahs promised to substitute for the wicked, liberal parliamentary State a new organic Commonwealth with fixed classes and occupations and "associations" (the so-called *Buende-Staat*), they found their readiest listeners among young people condemned by unemployment to enforced brooding. Tired of the endless civil strife that has, with brief intervals been the curse of Germany for a thousand years, they turned to the strong fetters of old Prussia as many seek relief in other churches.

The revival of Prussianism became a chief ideal of the growing reaction. Its God-like omniscience, its spirit of blind obedience, its military tone and clear-cut decisions, its intolerance, appealed strongly to a generation weary of standing on its own hind legs.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT PRICE LIBERATION?

THE JUDGE: "What do you understand by national liberation?"

SCHERINGER: "I understand it to be the breaking up of the Versailles system and the annulment of the debt burden."

THE JUDGE: "This work is carried on by all legal governments of the German Republic."

(From the trial of Richard Scheringer, former lieutenant in the *Reichswehr*, who went over to Communism. Berlin, 1932.)

SOMEWHERE about the beginning of 1930 Germany went to war again and most people did not realize it. A war in which no shot was fired, or airplane darted toward the sun, or warship patrolled the sea, but a war nonetheless, in which the chief weapons were passive resistance, fortitude in misery, organized propaganda. A war of attrition as resolutely aggressive and perhaps ultimately as tragic as the late World Conflict. In Germany this war was innocently called "the struggle for liberation" (*Befreiungskampf*), elsewhere "the German attempt to set aside the Treaty of Versailles at any price."

Obviously, non-acceptance of the Treaty by Germany was itself enough to turn anything like sincere European or world co-operation into a farce. For on

one side stood Germany with its companions in misfortune, Hungary and Bulgaria, with sprawling Soviet Russia and (at times) its voluble little brother, Austria.

On the other, the states that profited by Germany's defeat: France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Roumania, Jugoslavia.

Britain was favorable to revision at the expense of France but hardly to the extent of restoring the confiscated German colonies or helping in the re-establishment of a powerful German war fleet. Italy, too, encouraged the German claims short of giving back any of the Italian portion of the war plunder, such as German-speaking South Tyrol.

The United States were, so long as they insisted upon the payment of the inter-ally war debts, a passive obstacle to revision; in so far as they wanted to end the "war," rather favorable to the German claims. Under all circumstances, the successive governments of the German Republic pursued the struggle for treaty revision with unparalleled tenacity, flexibility and at times an utter disregard for means.

It is hard to defend the Versailles Treaty, but nearly all well informed people believe that in 1919 Germany had to sign it or perish. Yet though the apocalyptic utterance of Philipp Scheidemann—"What hand must not wither that lays itself and us in such fetters!"—failed to materialize, the ink was not dry upon the paper at Versailles in 1919 before Germans were busy scheming how it could be thwarted, circumvented, modified and eventually set aside.

The German struggle for Treaty revision was not

merely a "foreign policy" in the sense this word is used abroad; it became almost the fundamental fact of German national life and a chief cause of the German reaction. For to achieve the revision, large masses of the people gradually developed a willingness to sacrifice Republic, democracy, personal freedom, national prosperity, and were withheld from resorting to actual arms chiefly by the fear of a second, more decisive defeat. The mental fixation of Treaty revision at any price is the only formula that made the German behavior intelligible. It was through this fixation that the struggle for revision literally became a continuation of the World War with other weapons.

What attitude did the Germans take? Very simple.

The Treaty of Versailles, in German eyes, was a monstrous document consecrating a peace into which Germany had been tricked by the publication of Wilson's *Fourteen Points*; it was a moral violation of the human conscience based on the untenable assumption of Germany's "sole guilt," in occasioning the late war. The terms of this Treaty were such that Germany would never really submit to them and in securing their revision need not be bound by any narrowly moral claims.

Intelligent Germans realized of course that nothing could possibly occur that would simply annihilate the Treaty of Versailles to their advantage. Therefore they concentrated only on the more objectionable clauses. Approximately in the order of their importance to the German politician these were as follows:

- 1) Cancellation of all reparations. This was urged

as an immediate panacea for the world's woes, since, as Heinrich Brüning so monotonously maintained while Chancellor, the payment of reparations was the chief cause of the world economic depression.

2) Equal armament with the other Powers. Either they disarmed down to Germany's level or Germany had the "right" to arm up to theirs. The Germans based their claim on two small texts, the one in the body, the other in the Covering Note to the Versailles Treaty, and on Article 8 of the League Covenant.

3) Restoration to Germany of the so-called Polish Corridor and the Free City of Danzig, which separate East Prussia from the bulk of Germany.

4) Restoration of Polish Upper Silesia.

5) The annexation of German Austria—a consummation desired by both countries.

6) The restitution of the former German colonies or their equivalent, as possession or as "mandate."

7) The re-acquisition from Belgium of the tiny "lost" territory of Eupen-Malmédy.

In other words, of the important sacrifices entailed in the lost war, the Germans have accepted only one; the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine to France. (Even this governmental renunciation was disavowed by patriotic fanatics.) Every other loss they expected—say rather intended!—to recover. Variable alone was the price they were willing to pay.

Fundamental of course was the claim for equal armament. Here the German case was weak in law but strong in equity. For regardless of the texts, why should one nation be permanently held to a lower level of "security" than the others?

Once, after listening for half an hour to a friendly

German officer's protest against one-sided disarmament, I expressed a wish to ask a question, but only on the condition that he promised in advance to answer "truly or not at all." He consented.

"Supposing," I said, "the German army to be made equal to the French army, how much longer would you abide by those Treaty stipulations you chiefly dislike?"

The major grew red; the major stammered, but he was a gentleman and he had given his word.

"Not very long," he finally admitted.

This frame of mind was as well understood to the west as to the east of the Rhine. It is probable neither the Locarno or Kellogg Pact could have long held the Germans to the approximate observation of the Treaty of Versailles, had they possessed the military means with which to defy their so-called "oppressors."

In the revisionist policy, the four German chief agencies were the official Foreign Policy; the recovery of military strength; the Private Armies that existed alongside the official *Reichswehr*; and the deliberately fostered exasperation of German Public Opinion.

The official Foreign Policy since the war can be divided naturally into three distinct periods: 1) The Period of Resistance, or Stinnes Period; 2) the Period of Fulfillment, or Stresemann Period; 3) the Samson Period.

The Period of Resistance began with the signing of the Armistice in Compiègne Forest, November 9, 1918, and ended with the collapse of passive resist-

ance to the French and Belgians in the Ruhr, September 26, 1923.

Intermediate high spots were the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, June 28, 1919; the preservation by Germany of the greater part of Upper Silesia through successful plebiscite; the arrangement of the still imperfectly revealed agreements with Soviet Russia at Rapallo, April 16, 1922; the Franco-Belgian Ruhr occupation of January 11, 1923.

On the whole, it was the blackest period in Germany's existence and ended with a defeat as definite and resounding as that of November, 1918.

The German weapons were first of all protest notes. They protested against everything, on all occasions, in anything but the spirit of a people just vanquished in the biggest of all wars. In point of fact, this protest policy was successful in preventing the trial abroad of the German military leaders whom the Allies called "war criminals," and in securing a few minor concessions. But it encouraged the Germans to overstep the point of safety. Their next instrument was the virtual sabotage of reparation payments. Here the chief tool was the inflation of the mark, which was allowed to slide down the path of least resistance. Private productive property remained thus virtually intact while the Government secured no adequate tax returns and therefore "could not" make the absurdly indefinite and excessively high payments demanded. This policy reached a climax when, to finance the passive resistance in the Ruhr, the Government deliberately printed money until shortly after the German collapse; it took 1,000,000,000,000 paper marks to make one gold mark.

The symbol of this period was Hugo Stinnes. Early in 1924, new to Germany, I was sitting one day in the large front waiting-room of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the *Wilhelmstrasse*. The door opened and a dark figure was shown in. Untidily dressed, thick-set, a powerful face above a great black beard.

"A rabbi," I thought at first. But then, "Impossible. Much too predatory. An Armenian rug-merchant? Too brutally self-assured. A Macedonian comitadji, a gang leader?" The door to the Minister's private office opened and the short black figure, bowing slightly in my direction, disappeared.

"Who in God's name was that?" I asked the usher. His voice broke with emotion: "The great Hugo Stinnes!"

Stinnes, the father of German trusts; the inventor of that unholy partnership between owners and workmen to exploit the consumers, that resulted in the social disintegration of Germany. The representative of German Imperialism at its most brutal, who could not distinguish politics from his private ends (he took "brokerage profits on deliveries in kind" to the Allies). The partisan of inflation, who invented the plan of circumventing reparation payments by a "cheap bankruptcy" that would transfer property intact from the German State to the rich industrialists. The masterly financier, who destroyed his enemies without respect for weapons, refused to pay his taxes, rose uninvited at the Spa Conference (he was not even a delegate) and hurled his defiance in the face of the Allied representatives. The ruthless schemer who dared the French to enter the Ruhr, organized

passive resistance against them, but when it began to hurt, was the first to demand its cessation—"overbearing, wrong-headed and inclined to insolence," as Lord d'Abernon described him. The predatory being whose spirit never really recovered from the blow of having to submit to the French. Hugo Stinnes, for years the real ruler and evil genius of Germany.

At the end of the Period of Resistance, Germany was less powerful, more miserable, and further removed from Treaty revision than ever before.

The rulers had, however, learned one vitally important truth: *Against the French readiness to compel Treaty observance by forceful invasion of German territory, no amount of verbal protest or sabotage or secret armament could avail. Therefore until such time as the French and Belgians evacuated their pledges in the Rhineland and a sufficient period had elapsed to lame French willingness to repeat the Ruhr castigation, Germany must fulfill the Treaty conditions and seek to secure the favor of Great Britain and of the neutral world, including the United States.*

The following years were therefore a Period of Fulfillment. The Germans accepted the Dawes Plan of Reparation Payment at London in August, 1924, and with it foreign supervision of their finances, a thing which they had consistently refused up to this time; thereby they secured the French-Belgian evacuation of the Ruhr. The next step was to get the invaders out of the Rhineland. For this purpose the first price paid was the signing of the Security Pact at Locarno in October, 1925. The Allies replied by evacuating the first of the three occupied Rhineland zones on February 1, 1926; by accepting Germany into the League

of Nations with a permanent seat on the Council; by abolishing the Inter-allied Military Control Commission which handicapped the expansion of German armaments (January 31, 1927); by evacuating the second Rhineland zone (November 30, 1929); later, after the Germans accepted the hated Young Plan (March, 1930), by abolishing foreign financial supervision, and finally, by the complete release of German territory (excepting the Saar District) at the end of June of the same year.

Germany seriously paid reparations, but there was no thought of giving up the unnatural understanding with Soviet Russia, or the demands for equal armament, for the Corridor, for the annexation of Austria, for colonies, etc., etc. As assets in the struggle against Poland, Germany clung to the Soviets and even supported Lithuania. A thorough propaganda spread the notion that reparation payments were bound to prove impossible. Meanwhile German institutions, both public and private, took advantage of a capital surfeit to borrow themselves fat, chiefly from the United States. They hoped thereby to placate their extremists and win them to the Fulfillment Policy. They hoped also to profit by the friendship that necessarily binds creditors to their debtors, and they planned to equip themselves socially and industrially, regardless of future consequences. Among these consequences were permanently unbalanced national, State and city budgets, against which S. Parker Gilbert, foreign Agent General for Reparation Payments, protested in vain.

This money was gladly loaned on the general supposition that henceforth all Treaty revision would oc-

cur in friendly agreement with the Allies—that, as the French realized how peaceful the Germans' intentions were, their hold would relax.

So it would have, but the French missed psychological opportunities to be magnanimous. German impatience refused to be curbed. The author of the Fulfillment Policy, Gustav Stresemann, died prematurely in the Autumn of 1929—and the world economic crisis drove the mass of Germans into the hands of power-worshiping Nationalists and cynical, ambitious agitators. Once the Rhineland was free, the Nationalists, who had never really understood the benefits of the Fulfillment Policy, took the bit in their teeth, somewhat as they had done during the ill-omened Period of Resistance. They figured that the world had too much to worry about at home to approve a second attempt to coerce Germany, and that the French and Belgians would not themselves again embark on so risky an adventure. Short of provoking a new invasion, Germany could go ahead and recuperate its lost power and freedom, regardless of any theoretical effect upon anything so diaphanous as international solidarity. This meant the end of the Fulfillment, or Stresemann Period. The Germans repudiated the only statesman of rank they have produced since Bismarck.

Gustav Stresemann, whom his friend the ex-Crown Prince appropriately named "Uncle Gustav," began life as the son of a saloon-keeper in East Berlin, wrote his doctor's thesis on the "bottle beer trade," entered politics as a protégé of big business, howled for war annexations with Stinnes—and then, seeing the light,

spent the last six years of his life working for European co-operation and international organization.

In some ways he never outgrew his modest origin; to the end of his days he glowed in the presence of royalty and mourned that his sons at the university did not join an aristocratic dueling corps.

His appearance was against him: fat, thick-necked, impressively bald, a great eater and drinker and smoker, his inharmonious features and harsh voice masked the subtle quality of his mind. Only his sensitive mouth and small hands revealed the humanist, the intuitive politician who could see through an opponent and undo his intrigue without effort. He was an orator of mark and a lightning-like opponent in verbal debate, who could kill with a word.

Thanks to his unusual mind, to his friendships with Lord d'Abernon, the British Ambassador, and later with Aristide Briand, Stresemann realized at an early date, not only that Treaty fulfillment alone could save Germany, but that narrowly national strife on anything so small as the European chess board was bound to result in general ruin. The former Imperialist and consistent monarchist came to realize that in striving for an organized Europe and international understanding, he was best serving his country in the immediate sense of the word. He and Briand had already gone further than his opponents dreamed towards planning a Europe in which Germany's chief claims would be satisfied. At the time he died, his aim was a closely united Continent under German leadership—and only in this sense perhaps did he trick Briand, who wanted the same thing under French influence.

Stresemann counted on Germany's superior economic power.

The Germans who feared and derided him during his life sought to smother his achievements and his memory in silence. They claimed that even had this man lived a normal span (he was only fifty-one when he died), his work necessarily culminated in the liberation of the occupied Rhineland; his Fulfillment Policy could go no further. In fact they seemed eager to hide the fact that but for Stresemann the Allies would have gone on bivouacking on Germany's neck. Did they suspect that Stresemann's courage, will, razor-sharp instinct and superior intelligence would have prevented the subsequent bull-like policy of Treaty revision at all costs and headed off the people from the risks inherent in the Samson Policy?

Stresemann's death left the way free for the "active policy" desired by the impatient Nationalists.

Indications of change were almost immediately visible. Stresemann's body was hardly cold when the new Foreign Minister, Julius Curtius, almost brought the evacuation of the second Rhineland zone to a halt by his stubborn refusal to comply with the Allied demands in minor military matters.

In March, 1930, Hjalmar Schacht, the chief German negotiator of the Young Plan, the optimist who went to Paris imagining that he could secure the acceptance of an annual payment of not over one billion marks a year and who actually promised to pay two billions, resigned from his position as President of the *Reichsbank*. This was intended as a protest against his government's weakness in allowing the Allies to "denature" the original Paris agreement. Subse-

quently this former Democrat joined the most active Treaty revisers and became a close ally of reaction.

In March, President Hindenburg proclaimed a more active policy on the Eastern frontiers. In June, Curtius promoted the gifted permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Carl von Schubert, to the German Embassy in Rome, and filled the vacant position with Bernhard von Bülow, nephew of the late Prince Bernhard von Bülow, the most socially brilliant and politically mis-inspired statesman of pre-war days. Young Herr von Bülow, white-haired and good looking, combined an excellent education, keen intelligence, with an embarrassed manner and an aversion to society. Anyone less like the convivial Schubert, the gregarious Stresemann, could hardly be imagined. For years he had sat in the rear upper story of the *Wilhelmstrasse*, inventing new reasons for distrusting the League of Nations and dreaming of the day when politics would again become the traditional affair of force and guile. This was the man whom Curtius chose for the key position among the directors of German foreign policy.

With the final evacuation of the Rhineland an open change of tactics became feasible and German policy entered the Samson Period, in which its chief weapon was threat of general catastrophe.

On the day of the evacuation, Curtius proudly called the attention of the German press to the fact that, although the French departure anticipated the Treaty date by five years, Germany had not "the slightest intention of thanking them for going." The following day, the "enraged population" of the evacuated area carried out summary vengeance on a num-

ber of Germans who had formerly led the "separatist movement," and whom the German Government, in the absence of the French, had solemnly promised to protect.

On July 15, Curtius successfully denatured Briand's scheme for a united Europe (*Pan-Europa*) by the insistence that Turkey and Soviet Russia be included. On August 5, a hundred thousand members of the Nationalist and largely monarchical Steel Helmet organization paraded in "liberated Coblenz" in the presence of the former Crown Prince and General Hans von Seeckt. On September 14, Adolf Hitler's National-Socialists surprised the world by winning 107 out of a total of 577 seats in the German *Reichstag*.

Curtius in Geneva demanded immediate disarmament for everybody. In the *Reichstag*, on February 10, 1931, he coolly stated: "We do not desire a new Europe to be built on the basis of our worst breakdown." As the world economic crisis heightened, the new German tactic became clear: to refuse all cooperation in combating it, unless paid by Treaty revision. *Blind Samson in the temple at Gaza threatening to bring down the roof on the heads of all within it, including his own*. For, it was commonly said, if the German people did not speedily receive satisfaction for their demands, they would "go Bolshevik." Which would mean the Bolshevization of the rest of Europe—or so it was claimed.

The unsuccessful springtime attempt to carry out a customs union with Austria which would have accomplished the essentials of a political fusion without (in my opinion: the Hague Court judges thought

otherwise by a tiny majority), violating any international engagements, spread economic disaster throughout Europe in the summer and crashed the German banks. The French had been willing and able to prevent the worst of this and to help repair the ravages, on condition the Germans promised for a period to abstain from further revisionist agitation. Instead of accepting, the Catholic Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, who, symbolically speaking, wore an Iron Cross at the end of a rosary, preferred to let matters take their course; insisted ever more emphatically on equal armament; and finally, in January, 1932, announced that Germany could pay no more reparations.

About the same time, a veritable campaign to educate the German mind to the "Polish danger" broke out, and was furthered by the authorities, although its real authors remained unknown. In May, 1931, the Steel Helmet organization held a mammoth convention at Breslau, close to the Polish frontier, with the result that even more hysterical jingoism flamed up on both sides of the border, and a state of mind favorable to open war resulted. The indignation of a weary, mentally confused and brutally impoverished people was skillfully turned from its Nationalist leaders and its greedy business magnates against the "external enemy."

Such a provocative policy seemed bound to end either in successful Treaty revision or in the total collapse of Germany, the third since the opening of hostilities in 1914. Yet Heinrich Brüning, though unquestionably superior in mind, was far too rigid in character for the contortions of German policy. If Brüning asked his people to sacrifice concrete pros-

perity to national pride and honor, he did it as one who habitually subjugates the flesh to the spirit. When the "cardinal," as he was commonly called, said "no," he meant "no."

The early resistance to reparation demands which brought on the Ruhr invasion cost the country a sum variously evaluated between one and four billion dollars. It impoverished the entire middle class and thereby paved the way for their radicalization by Adolf Hitler. It brought about the death of German babies and old people. As the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of April 2, 1932, so frankly put it, "Germany once before fought on this ground, in 1923, when the French invaded the Ruhr. Then the currency and savings were staked. . . . Now it is a struggle to abolish the tribute, and the stake is the entire German business system."

But Brüning's successors (May, 1932) had no stomach for asceticism on a scale that had begun to menace the national wealth. Accordingly, at Lausanne, Chancellor Franz von Papen took a cosmopolitan tone, and after an exhibition of tolerance and friendly behavior that, in the person of Brüning, would have sent the Nationalist zealots into epilepsy, ended by promising in the future to spread a last small payment over a few years, if world economic recovery permitted. Thereby he secured what no amount of brash threats by irresponsible chauvinists could ever have obtained: the officially recognized revision of the reparation clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

Quite obviously, this temporary reversion to the Stresemann policy inevitably occasioned that chorus of recrimination which the post-war Germans have

been led to identify with national strength. But before the Reparation Agreement had so much as been signed, the Cabinet switched back to Samson with the announcement that unless it was speedily conceded equal rights (*Gleichberechtigung*) with the other nations in the matter of armament (officially designated by President Paul von Hindenburg as the "national task for 1932"), it would go ahead and increase its own supply of troops and weapons, regardless of the Treaty of Versailles—or rather, in deference to a purely German interpretation of the Treaty as obliging the victor nations to disarm. For in the meantime, the leadership in the matter of Treaty revision had passed from the Cabinet to the generals and the street—thanks in part to the persistent efforts of preceding Cabinets to awaken a fanatically Nationalist state of mind in the common people.

Having started on the path of national resurrection, it seemed that the Germans must go the entire flaming way, whatever the internal price. It was frenzied opposition to the Versailles Treaty that in the Period of Resistance diverted the energy of the new régime from that stabilization of the Republic which should have been its first task. During the Fulfillment Period, the reactionary forces were kept in check. It was not Treaty revision itself that went so far towards depriving the Germans of their desire for internal freedom. Revision of the Versailles Treaty—or portions of it—was inevitably the aim of any self-respecting German Government. But revision at any cost—romantic, one-sided-aggressive revision that deliberately sought to further a Nationalist psychosis—was almost bound to bring the most extreme Nationalists back into power

by making the possession of self-government seem of little worth in comparison with the re-acquisition of Germany's pre-war power and prestige among the nations. Carried to the point of a weaponless warfare of attrition, this revisionist policy necessarily opened the door to reaction of the most unreasoning type. One suspects that many of the most blatant patriots were less influenced by a sense for the injustice of the war treaties than by an incurable itch to use these treaties as pretexts for restoring their own lost power and privilege.

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CHAPTER VII

THE REVIVAL OF MILITARISM

“... the great tradition of the German people, which has always found its most visible expression in the Army.”

From the military weekly, *Deutsche Wehr*, May 27, 1932.

THE army is the incarnate power of a state and all armies seek to increase their power. The German Imperial army was the most powerful army ever seen. It was independent of the civil Government and responsible only to the Kaiser, whom it dominated. Three times, once in peace and twice during the war, it broke and tossed aside Chancellors who forfeited its approval. Its war aims were annexation of non-German lands and tribute from the conquered. Its ideas of a proper peace were delineated in the oppressive treaties of Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk, which it imposed on beaten Roumania and Soviet Russia. Its notion of an ideal state was immortalized in the memorandum prepared during the war by the General Quartermaster, Erich Ludendorff, and intended by him to be imposed upon his own “victorious people,” possibly as a prize for winning the war: state and military control of everything, family life, marriage, child bearing, education, housing, health, amusements, the entire country reorganized as one giant barracks, the heaven of an omnipotent drill-

sergeant, a new Sparta, which he and his like called a "greater fatherland."

The generals forcibly hammered the German people to a single weapon, the old Army. As a weapon it was incomparable. But when it broke—a catastrophe well symbolized by Ludendorff's flight to Sweden behind a pair of blue spectacles—and the component parts recovered their human individuality, the power slipped from the nerveless hands of the generals.

Fritz Ebert, the saddler President, Philipp Scheidemann, the tailor, Gustav Noske, the carpenter, snatched it from the street where the Communists were about to seize it—and handed it back to the astonished generals, through patriotism, through fear of Communism, through abhorrence of disorder, through the deference obviously owed by the "lower orders" to their social superiors. Ebert knew his place.

Militarism is not a matter of the number of soldiers maintained by any country, nor even of the frequency and ruthlessness of its wars. Militarism is a condition in which the armed forces are allowed to be the ruling factor in the State, independent of the civil Government, with political aims and ideals of their own. In this sense the Germany of 1932 was as militaristic as the one of 1914.

The "little *Reichswehr*" of a hundred thousand professional soldiers completely dominated the Republic. No government could stand a week without its support. Germany was a more or less veiled military dictatorship—as the adherents of the military power finally decided to admit. In the words of the former *Reichswehr* Minister, Wilhelm Groener, the *Reichswehr* "had become a factor, which no one can

pass over in political decisions" (*Zeitschrift für Politik*, March, 1932). In other words, through its influence on the President and menace inherent in its homogeneity and power, thirteen years after the Revolution, the Army once more had the last word in the government of Germany. This was militarism in its purest form.

How could it have come about so quickly? Surely General von Schleicher must himself sometimes have wondered at his position, as he sat in his office in the *Reichswehr* Ministry in Berlin and gave rein to his jovial, elastic imagination, as fertile in schemes as a machine gun in bullets. Schleicher's former chief, General Groener, boldly attributed the Army's return to power to the "Versailles dictate."

"Much too simple," War Minister Schleicher must have thought to himself. He, Schleicher, could take credit for more than that. For it was he who, back in the revolutionary days, when the alliance between Ebert and Groener, the Social-Democrat and the militarist, had just been made, persuaded the saddler to use "volunteers" to put down the rebellious Communists. Was it an accident that these volunteers were nearly all drawn from the most reactionary elements in the old Army? Or that the original *Reichswehr*, constituted by the law of March 5, 1919, should have largely been made up of these elements? Without the volunteers, Ebert—more patriot than Republican though he was—might conceivably have hit on the idea of constituting a purely republican guard to protect the infant Republic, and history would have been different.

And again, in 1923, it was Schleicher who per-

suaded Ebert to declare martial law so that the labor Governments in Saxony and Thuringia, which had already formed workers' battalions, could be nipped in the bud; thereby he established a precedent for the misuse of Article 48 of the Constitution, which was to prove so useful nine years later in virtually transferring power from the Parliament to the President.

Schleicher, too, who during long connection with the *Reichswehr* managed to re-establish that admirable service of "something that when practiced by our enemies, we call espionage," thanks to which he could sit in his little office in the *Reichswehr* Ministry beside the *Landwehrkanal* and hear the clocks ticking in the offices and bedrooms of everyone in Germany.

Really, the marvelous restoration of Army rule was due to a combination of circumstances no human being could have foreseen. In the first place, the Allies at Versailles, by their insistence on a small professional force, made it possible for the leaders, practically all of whom came from the old Army, to cut the new *Reichswehr* off from the mass of more or less socialistic and democratic people in those early revolutionary days and gradually to make of it something so "reliable and above parties." Reliable, that is, in the hands of its officers, not in those of the legitimate civil Government of Germany; above parties in the sense of being above the Republic. After all, in a country riven into three parts, reactionary, democratic and Communistic, was not the Republic itself merely a party? "Good Republicans" like Ebert, like the first *Reichswehr* Minister Noske, like his successor Otto Gessler, allowed the *Reichswehr* to decide for itself when it chose to intervene in defense of the State.

Against the early revolutionaries, certainly. Against "red" Saxony and Thuringia, with a will. Naturally not against the mutineering comrades of General von Luettwitz, who took the side of Kapp in 1920. Said the commander-in-chief, General von Seeckt, to the War Minister, Noske: "There can be no thought of setting *Reichswehr* to fight *Reichswehr*. Is it your intention, *Herr* Minister, to force a battle at the Brandenburg Gate between troops who a year and a half ago were fighting shoulder to shoulder against the enemy?"

A government that could stoop to sign the Versailles Treaty might expect a mutiny! (An army that accepted such an armistice from the victorious Allies in Compiègne Forest was obviously merely bowing to imperious necessity!)

Against revolting Bavaria, too, the *Reichswehr* had shown no great eagerness to intervene, for there, too, soldiers would have faced soldiers. "You see, *Herr Reichspräsident*, the chief aim of an army is to secure and defend our bleeding frontiers. To do this the *Reichswehr*, small as it is, must be reliable and above parties. Therefore it may be used against Communists and even democratic Republicans, because none of the soldiers are democratic Republicans. But it must not be used against reactionaries, because some of the soldiers and most of the officers are reactionaries." So we might imagine a very candid general explaining the situation to, let us say, the sympathetic ear of President Ebert.

This splendid independence from politics could be cultivated only in a small professional army. Yet to realize it in its ultimate perfection more was necessary

than a mistake on the part of the Allies. One even needed something more than a lot of Republican officials with an inferiority complex who connived at militarism on grounds of misplaced patriotism. To legalize this strange situation a special Constitution had to be adopted. This Constitution, the one of Weimar that the generals so cordially disliked, stated that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army was the President of the Republic. In times of crisis, the President might, subject to certain restrictions, at the request of the Chancellor set aside the Parliament and the Constitution and govern according to military law. The *Reichswehr* officers, therefore, conscious of the peculiarity of their position in claiming to be independent of the Parliament that provided their funds, announced that the Army and the President are "indivisible." The *Reichswehr* obeyed the President, not the Chancellor or the Parliament. The *Reichswehr's* tasks were defined to be two: it must defend the integrity of the *Reich* within, and it must represent its power without. It served, not the Republic, but the State, symbolized by the President.

Even more important was the manner of picking the recruits. The total army numbered only 100,000; in time of wholesale unemployment, the officers can pick and choose as they will. They themselves were for the most part of the same feudal class that furnished the leaders in the old Army. Their choice almost inevitably reflected their natural sympathies. Most of the recruits came from the country. Social-Democrats and boys with social-democratic fathers were excluded, lest they infect their comrades with socialist or pacifistic or international ideas. And this

at a time when the German Chancellor and many of the ministers as well as the President of the Republic, were Socialists!

Here it is necessary to remember the lofty position of the Army before the war. Serving only the Sovereign, not the Government, the socially exalted officer class naturally came to look upon itself as something sublimely intangible. Remembering that the Republican *Reichswehr* was humanly the same material as the old imperial officer corps, one comes to realize how absurd was the assumption that the new Army should hearken to the will of any civilians, to say nothing of a lot of Social-Democrats and fat burghers, many of them pacifists to boot! The very Republic itself did not think any too highly of its chosen representatives in the *Reichstag*. How often in choosing its Cabinet Ministers, it passed over the entire lot of Deputies in favor of some pompous city mayor or bureaucrat gray in office. Twenty-one percent of the officer corps were, in 1932, of aristocratic lineage, as against thirty percent in 1914. Could gentlemen, who, before the war, often enjoyed "personal relations with the ruling families" take undistinguished commoners really seriously? Obviously, they would have learned to do so in short order from a Lloyd George or a Clemenceau. After France became a Republic in 1871, it was nearly thirty years until, in the vindication of Alfred Dreyfus, the civil authorities finally broke the back of the military caste. It might have risen again after 1918, in the person of Marshal Ferdinand Foch, had he not happened to have the "Tiger," Clemenceau, for his instructor in Republican etiquette. The Eberts, Noskes, Gesslers, were anything but Clemenceaus: when their

will collided with that of the officers, it was not the latter that bent. One cannot blame the *Reichswehr*; an army seeks power for itself as naturally as a cat eats mice. The limits must be set by the civilians. In Germany the civilians lacked both the experience and the nerve.

Truly touching in the entire development was, indeed, the meekness with which Republican Ministers and Deputies accepted the ever growing claims of the officers to complete independence. Once or twice the civil rulers, notably Gustav Stresemann, did make an attempt to exercise their constitutional authority over the vagrant Army. General von Seeckt had to resign for allowing the eldest son of the ex-Crown Prince—a young man who may conceivably play a rôle in German history—to take part in army maneuvers. Naval Captain Lohmann was eventually called to account for his remarkable investments in moving pictures, real estate and other unmilitary business which cost seven million dollars of the taxpayers' money. But on the whole, the *Reichstag* not only allowed the *Reichswehr* to establish the principle that a general cannot be called to account by Parliamentarians, and that a *Reichswehr* Minister must not be a politician, but also that the Army and Navy need not account to the *Reichstag* for anything; not even for the way they spend their appropriations. Here lies the explanation for much that is obscure.

Be it charitably remembered that except in its refusal to arrest the Berlin mutineers of 1920, with General von Luettwitz, the *Reichswehr* never openly refused to obey the *Reichspräsident*, its constitutional commander, to whom it shifted the allegiance it for-

merly paid to the person of royalty. Those who imagined that after his electoral victory in September, 1930, Adolf Hitler would lead his "brown battalions" against the Government, forgot that so long as President von Hindenburg abided by his oath to the Constitution, the *Reichswehr* machine-guns would make hash of any open rebel—save perhaps, someone like Luettwitz, from the Army itself. What power the *Reichswehr* appropriated, it took with the consent and knowledge of rabbit-like Republican authorities. Naïve, timorous, unimaginative, the Republican leaders sought to buy a loyalty they should have commanded. They paid military pensions to officers, old and new, out of all gear with the prevailing standards. Each active officer was given a salary one degree higher than the bureaucrat to whom he corresponded as official. All the military were paid surprisingly well. Officers and soldiers alike enjoyed a comfort the Empire had never dreamed of providing. And when, under pressure of imminent bankruptcy, all officials' salaries had to be decreased, the lower ranks of the Army and Navy were partially exempted from the wage cut. Military budgets, however extravagant in appearance or out of keeping with the hard times, slipped through the *Reichstag* with practically none but Communist opposition. The officers accepted all things as their due. Like the Albanian pashas in the World War, they took whatever gifts were offered—and continued to go their own sweet way. There was but one manner for the civil authorities to impose their rule on hard headed men like these—and that was by force. No army and no king has long resisted a power that in one stroke could cut off the money,

but such conduct on the part of the *Reichstag* would have been greeted as treason!

Secure in their lofty military tradition, the *Reichswehr* authorities silenced all criticism by the answer that what they might be doing, though too deep for civilian understanding, was in reality necessary to the national defense! To a considerable extent they were right.

Power-seeking and un-Republican as they were, the officers were so devoted to the national cause as they saw it, that in their eyes all dissent seemed grotesque. This cause was the slow building up of German military power to something like the level at which it stood in 1914.

Such an ideal inevitably implied the revision of the Versailles Treaty and the right to re-arm, subject only to such limitations as might, by common agreement be applied to all States. In the order of their intensity, it may be said that the loyalties of the *Reichswehr* officers were first to Germany ("in its permanent identity," however), second to the *Reichspräsident*, third, to the Army tradition, and then, a long way down the list, to the Republic. What these men wanted was a military-minded people that would back them in their efforts to restore Germany's power and freedom in the only way that to their specialized minds appeared feasible, namely, by building up its military power. The real "internal enemy" was not the monarchist, the reactionary, nor even the revolutionary as such; it was the pacifist, the sentimentalist, the internationalist, the nationally indifferent. It was Erich Maria Remarque for instance, whom they called "sub-human." For in his world-famous novel,

All Quiet on the Western Front, Remarque made out as though the late war had been primarily a useless slaughter, instead of such a heroic sacrifice for one's country as gives to the soldier's calling a kind of moral dignity of its own.

"The success of Remarque's book," wrote the *Deutsche Wehr* (April 15, 1932) "is the last triumph of the profiteer and shirker and materialistic spirit (*Spiessergeist*)." And the same periodical (May 27, 1932) gave us the key to much that was obscure in the stubborn reactionary mentality of otherwise enlightened officers: "Crudely stated, any form of State which pays more than lip service to the will to resist, is acceptable to the *Reichswehr*. Inacceptable to the *Reichswehr* is a political tendency in which, consciously or unconsciously, the will to resist is decomposed or treated as unimportant. So too a Constitution under which treason cannot be completely stamped out, is in the long run irreconcilable with the interests of the national defense."

Wishing for confirmation of a suspicion, I went in person to the *Reichswehr* Ministry in Berlin, was shown through its endless corridors by a lady orderly, and finally found myself in the presence of an officer acquaintance.

"Why is the *Reichswehr* anti-Republican?" I queried.

"We are not interested in the form of State. We are non-political."

"Why are you hostile to the Weimar Republic?" I insisted.

"We desire a strong authority to look after the national interests."

"Do you mean that if even a radically democratic republic had from the beginning taken a strong military line, you in the *Reichswehr* would have upheld it with your hearts and subordinated your personal conservation to its needs?"

"Assuredly. Had we had a Gambetta, like France, to call the country to resistance against the enemy and awaken it to military renewal, we should have supported him with enthusiasm, however radical his internal politics."

Germany had no Gambetta. After the war came a period of war weariness amounting at its fringe to militant pacifism. People felt they had been duped by their leaders, that the war had been a ghastly sell, or at the best, a lamentable catastrophe. This was the attitude that the *Reichswehr* in Germany most resented and sought to overcome. But would any but militarists have accepted a military career?

Less inevitable in the *Reichswehr* attitude was its claim to carry on the tradition of the old German Army. For the comprehensible desire to carry on a glorious tradition led to a revival of the arrogance toward civilian authority that characterized Hindenburg and Ludendorff and the other generals before and during the World War. Yet this imitation seemed inherent in the *Reichswehr's* organization.

Be it remembered that to a considerable extent the early *Reichswehr* was composed of the least valuable elements in the old Army. Eventually a house-cleaning took place. This reorganization was the work of General Hans von Seeckt, who was the real father of the new Army, both in its military and in its political aspect. Seeckt made a virtue out of necessity. Toward

the end of the World War, it was becoming increasingly apparent that for the offensive a few highly trained men and much material, did the work. Seeckt managed to create an army which for its size, its training, its aggressive spirit and probable efficiency was superior to any in the post-war world. At the end of a few years he was able to point to his hundred thousand professionals with immense pride, for both their permanent officers and their long-time enlisted men had been welded to a model of Prussian precision. Ideally, they were trained to consider themselves a prolongation of the "old victorious army"—anything but a Republican militia. On parade their gait remained the goose step. Their discipline was terrific, but intelligent. As in the old Army all recruits were, for instance, given an almost Jesuitical training in self control. To a group of them, careless laughing lads of eighteen, a non-commissioned instructor would relate a funny story or an enormity. They must listen with immobile faces. If one laughed he was ordered to climb upon his wardrobe and, from this perch, without a smile, to bawl out an old hymn "From the high Heaven descending." Another who smiled was sent under his bed, whence he must chant another religious ditty: "From the depth of my need I cry to Thee." In other words, these prospective officers were trained to carry out the (apparently) most ridiculous, incongruous or terrifying orders, face the most ludicrous, provoking or alarming situations, without a trace of visible emotion. The theory was that he who controls his laughter can control his fear. But the result of such training was to widen the gulf between the stony-faced soldier and the world of free, human

spontaneity around him. This was what General von Seeckt wanted. A conscripted army drawn from the whole people reflects not only the popular qualities but the popular defects. Therefore, especially, it will be lacking in "martial spirit" and *esprit de corps*. It will not be so "reliable" in the hands of its leaders. Behind the highly trained professional army, providing their necessary reserves and doing the thousand and one subordinate duties necessary to waging war, Seeckt wanted a uniformed national militia, recruited from politically "reliable" circles. He wrote all this himself in a fascinating little volume, *Landesverteidigung*, a word which should here be translated, "waging war."

Yet the purely scientific character of this work could be doubted. I suspect that the wily general recommended the creation of an army like the present *Reichswehr*, reinforced by a selected militia, not only because of its efficiency in overcoming a possible foreign enemy, but because only such an army could remain extraneous to the civil Government and thereby, in last analysis become the decisive power in the State. If one remember the bitterness with which Seeckt fought to keep the *Reichswehr* away from parliamentary influence, and particularly to prevent the creation of any second force such as a Republican Guard, this suspicion becomes half a certainty. It is, in my opinion, completely confirmed by the simple fact that despite all its propaganda for "military equality" with the victorious nations, the officer corps of the *Reichswehr* did not wish to re-introduce universal conscription into Germany. The official reason was that the "new type of army" was

more efficient. The chief motive in the minds of the officers was, however, in my opinion, that universal conscription, by letting the people into the Army, would have broken that narrow spirit thanks to which the *Reichswehr* came to dominate German political life. Never again, so long as socialism and pacifism could play any part among the German masses, did the *Reichswehr* officers intend to allow the workmen to be armed, if they could prevent it. For thereby their own irresponsible power could be taken from them.

If General Kurt von Schleicher was for a time to wield more power than any single individual in Germany, he owed it, not only to his influence over President Hindenburg, but to the machine created by the man whose dismissal he, Schleicher, did—shall we say—nothing to prevent! Thanks to the organization of the new Army, thanks to Seeckt's books demonstrating the superiority of the professional to the conscripted force, thanks to government by Emergency Decrees, the *Reichswehr* leaders were able to pass from the defensive to that offensive that has always formed the kernel of Prussian strategy. From striving to defend themselves against political—i.e. republican—influences, they began purposely to dominate the specifically inner-political life of the country. A special department, the *Truppenamt*, was created for the purpose—the reason alleged was somewhat different. Those who doubt may turn to the book of Dr. Heinz Brauweiler, *Generals in the German Republic*, a volume written to the glory of Kurt von Schleicher, page 33, and read that Schleicher, not yet *Reichswehr* Minister, was a “specialist for the watching of inner

political activities. . . . He knows all the politicians and how to handle them. Naturally he does handle them."

"Naturally." In this word lay the essence of that renascent militarism that is probably the greatest reactionary influence in contemporary Germany. What right, in time of peace, has any general to "watch" inner political activities in a democratic State that respects itself? Whether *Reichswehr* preponderance could have been so openly developed under any president except the old field marshal, Paul von Hindenburg, who preferred soldiers to politicians, is questionable. The full part played by Hindenburg in furthering the revival of militarism cannot be accurately described, if only because the activities of the old gentleman were surrounded by his friends with an impenetrable wall through which none but initiated eyes could pierce. By comparison with the real activities of President Paul von Hindenburg, the life of the Pope at Rome is crystal clear. Lord d'Abernon, who as British ambassador, certainly had an entrance everywhere, wrote (*An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, p. 257): "The President, Hindenburg—essentially a soldier—instinctively distrusts anything but force." Clearly enough, even while he abided by the letter of the Constitution the old man instinctively endeavored to interpret it in the jolly old spirit of Potsdam. This is about the only interpretation that can be given to his obvious deference to the opinion of officers, *Junkers* and reactionary officials.

Thanks to Hindenburg, Germany's government was openly turned over to the man who had long half-

governed in secret. The covert reaction became open. By the spring of 1932, the over-weening power of the *Reichswehr*—built up over long years by intelligent, willful generals, and consecrated by Heinrich Brüning on the day in the summer of 1930 when he shut out the *Reichstag* and began governing by Emergency Decrees that needed the President's signature—shone in the full sunshine. Already during the financial smash of 1931, when Chancellor Brüning hurried from Paris to London to seek assistance to save the German banks, *Reichswehr* Minister Groener had announced to the Cabinet, that if the Government consented to the French demands of a political armistice as the price of a loan, he, Groener, could not answer for the loyalty of the Army. No general in Mexico or the Balkans could have expressed the situation more clearly.

Be it remembered: The German reaction was fundamentally threefold, anti-republican, anti-foreign, anti-labor. By its successful refusal to submit to the civil authorities, the *Reichswehr* slowly choked the life out of the democratic Republic. By its emphasis on immediate and one-sided Treaty revision and military preparation it deliberately diminished still further what little hope remained of substituting peaceful means of international settlement for war. It was anti-labor because it continued the old imperial tradition, selected its leaders primarily from among the aristocracy and upper middle class, and resented the fact that labor in Germany, having borne most of the burden and received none of the promised benefits of the late World War, showed little enthusiasm in preparing another one.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIVATE ARMIES

"Of course, everyone knew that in life one must be perpetually doing things which, if they were known, would be a legitimate ground of protest from somebody else."

Opinion of the late Walter Rathenau, then German Foreign Minister, as recorded by the British Ambassador Lord d'Abernon.

NO ONE can keep a proud nation disarmed against its will. To have held Germany powerless, the victorious Allies would have had to enforce a permanent military occupation, an uncomfortable and probably impossible undertaking.

The most dogged aim of every German Cabinet after the revolution was the restoration of the country's military power. To most of the rulers, military renaissance was consistently more important than the preservation of democratic institutions. With the result that although by 1932 "disarmed" Germany was not so well armed as it would have been without the Versailles Treaty and the neutralized Rhineland and the French airfleet and long-range guns that could from the frontier destroy the industrial plants in the Ruhr, it was very far from powerless. For from bitter experience the "Allied Governments" have learned how impossible was their first intention of keeping the country down to the armament limitations it accepted

at Versailles. They became resigned to the inevitable rehabilitation of Germany as a military power. But they wanted the process slow, and the Germans wished it rapid. This question of pace was also the chief wedge that divided the "national" minded Germans from the Liberals and Socialists. To the latter the re-acquisition of national power ought, to some extent, be subordinated to the happiness and comfort of the living Germans. On this account, they were considered treasonable, cowardly and materialistic by more melodramatic natures. In point of fact, the country was almost constantly swayed in practice by the nationalistic conception. The exceptions came at crucial points where open defiance would have resulted in a new humiliation at the hands of the armed victors—as in the occupation of the Ruhr.

The German military policy was the most candid thing in the world: the re-acquisition of power and unlimited national sovereignty. It was carried through with rare consistency.

Its first instrument was wailing and propaganda. "Never," we were told, "was such a wicked Treaty as this one! Never was a noble, harmless people so wronged. Never were such humiliating, cruel and impossible stipulations imposed on a civilized nation. Surely the world must realize that the Treaty of Versailles—that piece of shameful blackmail—was founded on a lie: the assumption of Germany's total guilt in causing the World War! It can never be carried out." Now for a people schooled in Prussian historical theories, in which *Vae victis* ranks as the Eleventh Commandment, to behave so about a peace that, all in all, left their purely German territory and

population comparatively intact, was a mixture of hypocrisy, calculation and naïveté. But it worked; Liberals and sentimentalists the world over were convinced that the Allies at Versailles committed not only a blunder but "a wrong too great to be told."

Then came the effort, by the so-called Volunteer Corps who had been engaged to repress communism in Germany, to thwart certain Treaty stipulations by force. The attempt to seize the Baltic States for Germany failed, as did passive resistance in the Ruhr, but the volunteers were distinctly successful in Upper Silesia and, with the able assistance of the British Army, in scotching French military attempts to form separate republics in the Rhineland and the Palatinate.

Yet the fundamental military policy left all these side-shows outside the main tent. Inside was the *Reichswehr*. The German generals made the *Reichswehr* into the most efficient military body of equal size in the world, within the elastically conceived limits of the Treaty. No money was spared to this end.

But this was not good enough. Necessary also was a policy of discreet Treaty evasion. So long as the Inter-allied Military Control Commission was on the ground and actively snooping about, certain things had to be carefully hidden, and others left undone. It is difficult to say what. But the number of finds made by these officers was great enough to allow the supposition that something more remained undiscovered. And the following conclusion is inescapable: if the Germans had intended to disarm, they would not have hidden arms and munitions as they did and imported shells from Soviet Russia; if they intended to evade,

their word as to the state of their armaments was of small value.

Of course, military tanks could not be manufactured and driven about the landscape in large numbers without attracting unwelcome attention. Military airplanes, particularly pursuit planes would be recognized by a practiced eye. But with factories in Sweden and Russia and who knows what other countries, the necessary plans and models and tests could be made, and a certain, if not a requisite, number of military pilots thoroughly trained. There was a time when the traffic of German officers back and forth to Russia with double passports, one white, one blue, provided a welcome income for the sleeping-car companies.

Moreover, if anywhere in Germany, it had been possible to make fast caterpillar tractors, which in a few hours could be encased in steel plate and equipped with machine guns, the problem of military tanks would have been solved.

The more serious general problem of industrial mobilization permitted solution by the appropriation of large sums of money for research, and by paying the factories so well for the small amounts of material actually delivered that they could afford to keep themselves in readiness for the day when their full-time production might be required. Military orders for friendly foreign countries such as Soviet Russia might also help. Government subsidies could do the rest. After the Allied officers had finally (in January 1927) been induced to depart and present Germany with a moderately clean "bill of health," such problems were simplified. Shipyards that could

produce marvels such as the new ten-thousand-ton pocket battleships, fast enough to run away from any ship afloat that they could not sink, were able to turn out the other missing types in fairly short order. In brief, it was the opinion of foreign military experts in 1932 that within a very short time after any declaration of hostilities, the German military machine—except for submarines and dreadnoughts and such gigantic apparatus—would be admirably equipped. The obvious weaknesses of the German military defense were two: first, a lack of enough fighting planes to contest the air immediately against a serious adversary, second, a lack of highly trained reserves to wage even the brief type of war, envisaged by the aggressive strategy of General Hans von Seeckt, the creator of the *Reichswehr*. This strategy required the use of a small, highly mechanized army of specialists. Now according to German official figures, in the spring of 1932, 2,028 persons held licenses as civil air pilots. The total number of licensed aircraft (May, 1932) was only 776. Obviously reserve flyers were there, since with a very short new training most of these pilots could be used for war flying. What Germany seemed to lack for a new war were trained infantrymen.

Losses there are bound to be even in the most highly mechanized army. The gaps must be immediately filled or the efficiency will suffer. The first reserves should be as thoroughly trained as the army in the field. How many thoroughly trained reserves for offensive fighting could the *Reichswehr* count on in November, 1932? Who could say? The Germans kept such matters to themselves and punished such of their

people as referred to them in public. The following estimate was made by a foreign expert:

Released from the <i>Reichswehr</i> after 12 years service	100,000
Police and Customs Guards and Rail- way Police	75,000
Picked from the best of the so-called Frontier Guard (<i>Grenzschutz</i>)	25,000
<hr/>	
Total of highly trained reserves	200,000

A totally insufficient number. Where could more be found later? Where indeed, if not in the ranks of the so-called patriotic societies that honeycombed German life like the Greek letter fraternities at an American university? This might be the explanation for the warm intimacy that united the active officers and soldiers of the *Reichswehr* to the more militaristic of these organizations. The Propaganda Center for Universal Military Service (*Propagandazentrale für allgemeine Wehrpflicht*) estimated the number available at two million. One million young men were organized for what is known euphemistically as "military sport"—meaning target practice, rudimentary drill and instruction. At least half a million more were collected in the Steel Helmet and other veterans' societies, and four hundred thousand odd marched in Adolf Hitler's storm battalions, the brown shirted "S.A." and "S.S." (*Sturmabteilungen* and *Schutzstaffeln*).

The Germans are a gregarious nation of organizers. As much as or more than Americans, they love to

"belong." The welter of *Vereine* and Confederations simply defies brief description. For centuries they had been trained to military discipline. This had had the result of making them susceptible to bold military leadership. Uniforms were indispensable. In no other country did so many grown men play with lead soldiers. In no other country (except perhaps in Japan, that Prussia of the East) would a political party seek popularity by claiming to be "the heir to the old Army."

All this must be kept in mind in appraising the statement of the former *Reichswehr* Minister, General Wilhelm Groener, that the patriotic societies sprang up to take the place of that military sovereignty (*Wehrhoheit*) which was forbidden the German Government at Versailles.

This was by no means the whole story. The first patriotic societies were frankly anti-revolutionary. The *Einwohnerwehr* (Inhabitants' Defense League) and the Volunteer Corps were founded to suppress communism. They possessed weapons and were led by former officers, most of them of that ne'er-do-well, adventurous type that finds patriotism an agreeable pretext for indulging a restless nature. The new *Reichswehr*, faced with the none too easy task of trying to win a plebiscite in Upper Silesia against armed bands of Poles, but restrained as to its means by the Allies, could do nothing but place its cause in the hands of these bands. Since the bands were illegal, their existence had to be kept secret. Hence the revival of the *Fehme*, or old knightly court, in which leaders sat in secret and passed sentence of death upon real or supposed informers.

The Ehrhard Brigade, the Rossbach Organization, the Consul Organization, the Black *Reichswehr*, the *Arbeitskommandos* (Labor Battalions), were not much different. Fanatics connected with them were responsible for the murders of the Republican Ministers, Matthias Erzberger and Walter Rathenau. On at least three occasions they endeavored to overturn the frail Republic. The first attempt was that of Wolfgang Kapp, the farmbank manager, and General Walther von Luettwitz. As a military insurrection it succeeded perfectly. Yet a general strike of the workers starved it out. Another rebellion occurred at the fortress of Kuestrin, in 1923. Major Wilhelm Buchrucker, the leader of the Black *Reichswehr*, attempted to rise against a government of "low pacifists." The regular army arrested and disarmed him. About the same time, a more determined third uprising was attempted in Munich in the name of His Excellency General Erich Ludendorff, by a somewhat obscure agitator named Adolf Hitler. The *Reichswehr* division in Munich, commanded by General von Lossow, had gone over to the more or less separatist clerical Government of Bavaria. The latter lent an ear to the conspirators, who even then were popularly supposed to have been partially financed by Mussolini. But at the last moment, the Bavarians changed their mind, and remained neutral, the rebels marched through the streets of Munich only to be swept by machine guns. Ludendorff walked fearlessly on, and was arrested. Hitler managed to make himself invisible and avoid arrest for a few days. Later both, with their chief confederates, were brought before a court. Ludendorff was acquitted for reasons known

only to blind *Justitia*; Hitler condemned to a few years imprisonment, and soon amnestied.

After that time the patriotic societies refrained from open rebellion against the Republic.

The Steel Helmet, or Confederation of Frontline Soldiers, the most respectable of the private armies, was founded on Christmas Day, 1918, in the Kaiser Hall of the "Harmonie" in Magdeburg, by a liquor manufacturer, Franz Seldte. Its avowed purpose was to end the "swinishness of the revolution" and it swore to accept as members only those soldiers who could prove they had been under fire. From the beginning, therefore, the Steel Helmet was opposed to the democratic Republic, but so far as I know, it never rebelled or incited to open rebellion. Its aim was avowedly national defense. It took as its motto: "The Steel Helmet sees in the restoration of Germany's military power (*Wehrhaftmachung*) the only way to freedom and to true world-peace." It always provided the most responsible elements in the improvised military formations of post-war Germany, especially of the Frontier Guard along the Polish border.

In January, 1921, it had sixty-three groups. Forbidden for a short time after Walter Rathenau's murder, it was soon rehabilitated and grew mightily. The number of its members was not published: leaders claimed half a million by the end of 1931.

The organizers? Former officers, prosperous business men of the old-fashioned friendly German type, at least half of them former students of the dueling corps, with scarred cheeks. See them at the annual leaders' convention at Magdeburg where they turned up in 1932 nine thousand strong! Heavy, earnest figures, military in the old way. No eloquence, few

promises. The "spirit of the old Army," was the deity they worshiped. This spirit alone, they believed, could free Germany from treaty fetters, pacifist twaddle and socialism. Beer and tobacco. Old fashioned, somewhat over-ripe jokes. Man-talk. The Germany of Bismarck, reliable, untouched by the newer revolutionary streams, free from spreading hysteria. President Paul von Hindenburg was for years the Honorary President and two *Reichswehr* chiefs, Generals von Seeckt and Heye, entered the organization so soon as they retired from active service.

Next important was the army of Adolf Hitler, over 400,000 brown-clothed lads, most of them unemployed, many under age, with souls that for lack of proper food, had learned to feed on hatred. Hatred of the Republic, of the foreigner, of the entire contemporary world, all rolled into one and personified in a word, the "System." Here were few solid burghers, but many disinherited. And as organizers and leaders whom could one find but the well known group of adventurous *condottieri* who had had their hands in everything violent since the foundation of the Republic—Schulz, Goering, Roehm, and beside them (bless my soul!), His (one time) Imperial Highness, August Wilhelm of Hohenzollern. What was he doing in this company?

This organization could not at first instance be considered a "well of reserves" for the national defense. This was Adolf Hitler's private army, and the aim and purpose of its organizers were the establishment of that dominion over the German street which alone could smooth the path leading to the "Third Empire." As the retired major, George Soldan, so neatly put it: "Hundreds of thousands have not provided them-

selves with their own soldier dress in order merely to play." (*Deutsche Wehr*, April 22, 1932.)

Yet critical as the regular army leaders have been of an organization like Hitler's, primarily organized for second-degree civil war, their soldiers' hearts could but thrill with pride at the sight of so much aggressive patriotism, so much "joy in militarism" (*Wehrfreudigkeit*), and therefore extended to them that benevolent protection without which the private armies would never have been permitted to exist. The outspoken Republican organizations did not enjoy this protection to say nothing of the Communists!—they were not popular with the Army. For what could officers do with recruits who had come under the influence of that demoralizing phrase heard so frequently among German Democrats: "No more war!"

Not only as a source of trained reserves were the patriotic societies the natural allies of the *Reichswehr*. They were even more important as an "educational influence," since without them the German people would not so quickly have recovered that sense for its intolerable position and that interest in soldiering which all generals consider the highest conceivable qualities. For the patriotic societies did more than anything else in bringing the masses to realize the nation's "shame" and to understand that the way to erase it was to show willingness to fight somebody, if necessary. The essence of this shame appeared to be threefold:

"Germany was oppressed;"

"Germany was a 'colony';"

"Germany was insecure."

True, of course, every one of them, but only if you understood the lingo. German oppression consisted in having to submit to war treaties, pay reparations and refrain from annexing Austria.

Germany was considered a "colony" because it built up on borrowed money the economic and productive structure which was ruined by the war and the inflation, and because the lenders actually were brutal enough to expect a return on their investments. The thesis of German extremists was that since the private debts had been incurred "in order to pay tribute," no moral obligation to repay them existed.

That "Germany was insecure" can be understood only in the light of emotions cleverly induced by deliberate propaganda. Clearly enough, nobody in the world was going to attack Germany, or invade Germany, or confiscate German property abroad so long as Germany remained quiet. "But they might!" the Germans answered. Yes, they might. They might invade Denmark or overrun Switzerland. Canada in this sense is dangerously insecure against the United States. This fact gives the Canadians no sleepless nights.

Germany's western frontier was guaranteed by the Locarno Pact and Germany was frequently offered an "East Locarno" guaranteeing its Polish frontier, on condition of dropping the claim to the Corridor.

What the Germans meant by insecurity was simply *lack of power to force a revision of the peace treaties*. To them Germany remained insecure so long as the Lithuanians could compel obedience from the population of the former German town of Memel, or when Polish zealots threatened the Free City of Danzig or

Czechoslovakian courts condemned members of the German minority for membership in the German National-Socialist party. Germany was insecure so long as the French could threaten to keep the Saar territory forever unless the Germans dropped their threat of arming in defiance of the Treaty.

In other words, German insecurity began from the moment the country started trying to nullify the unpleasant consequences of the lost war without common consent. Since just this was the primary national aim, the resulting insecurity could only be corrected when the country, by acquiring a sufficiently large and powerful army, could defy France and its allies. Any good Nationalist must understand this argument. Strange to say, numbers of the Germans just after the war were slow in catching on to it. They had to be taught that they were oppressed and insecure. Their instructors were the *Reichswehr* and the Nationalists and the patriotic societies.

A conclusive proof of this assertion was the situation that lasted for years on the eastern frontier. National Government, Prussian government and army combined to build up a civilian guard along the entire eastern border. Probably every night, somewhere between the Baltic Sea and Silesia, young men assembled to march, parade, maneuver, sometimes with weapons, under the order of ex-officers who roared at them in railway stations in voices that awoke sleeping travelers. Farm hands, on big estates with no taste for this sort of thing were dismissed. Occasionally a section of the frontier population would get carried off its feet by propaganda, rumors and mysterious reports of "Polish mobiliza-

tion" and coming attacks. Then, believing that this time the "inevitable" war was really there, a merchant in Silesia would telephone a merchant in Berlin to "corner barbed wire and make a fortune."

This atmosphere of suspicion and hatred was deliberately encouraged by the *Reichswehr*. First, Lieutenant Hans Martin of the Third Prussian Infantry, stationed at Marienwerder, near the Corridor, published a piece of fiction: "*Attention! The Eastern Marches Broadcast: Last night Polish troops violated the frontiers of East Prussia.*" This was a lively account of a hypothetical Polish attempt to seize East Prussia, full of reproaches against the slack German Republic for not providing Germany with a bigger and better equipped army, and containing a glowing description of Polish savagery. All in all a well conceived attempt to keep German hatred of Poland at white heat. This was called "strengthening the military spirit." What the German people needed, in the minds of the *Reichswehr* officers, was a greater interest in military things. How better foster this than by hammering in the fact of national shame? Obviously, therefore, the private armies could not be allowed to disappear from Germany until such time as the *Reichswehr* lost its predominant influence, or the Allies, by consenting to German re-armament on the desired scale, rendered them superfluous. As the *Deutsche Wehr* puts it, "The preservation of the confederative movements (i.e. patriotic private armies) is the presupposition of any inner and outer reconstruction."

Vivat exercitus, pereat res publica!

CHAPTER IX

GERMANY FOLLOWS THE BAND

IN THE early months of 1919, while the peace treaties were being so vexatiously hammered out at Paris, an aristocratic German statesman happened to meet an American diplomat whom he had known before the war.

The German: Can you tell me what sort of terms we may expect?

The American: Military terms.

The German: But Wilson?

The American: In spite of Wilson.

The German: Thank God! For in that case we shall overcome the revolution and secure our national freedom so much the sooner.

That German aristocrat was right. It is conceivable that under a milder treaty the democratic German Republic might have continued to flourish instead of languishing in agony.

Germany was ripe for constitutional change before the war, but a Republic was the last thing most of the people demanded. In fact, the real father of democracy was the all-powerful, the Quartermaster General, Erich Ludendorff, who was determined to tempt President Wilson into accepting the Armistice which alone could save a large part of the German Army from the ignominy of unconditional surrender. The people

were certainly not clamoring for any so far-reaching reforms, or if they were, it was Communism they wanted. As Prince Max of Baden told the *Reichstag* (October 22, 1918), not the arbitrary stubbornness of the rulers but lack of popular insistence on political power had so long kept Germany an autocracy. Nothing is more illuminating than the scandalized indignation with which Fritz Ebert, soon to be Germany's first president, chided his Socialist colleague, Philipp Scheidemann for rashly proclaiming the Republic from the *Reichstag* railing.

This Republic the mass of the people accepted with comparative enthusiasm, but largely in the naïve faith that it would secure them better treatment at the hands of the Allies. When this faith collapsed, many would have been for giving up the Republic, had this seemed feasible. In the same spirit they later accepted the Locarno Pacts and entered the League of Nations in the belief that the French would reward their good behavior by tearing up the Peace Treaties. When, somewhere about 1929, they began to realize that the war had "really" been lost, that the Peace Treaties were there to stay as long as France and Belgium could maintain them, this realization was enough to turn "Republicans" into a mass of reactionary Nationalists. One may say that the ineptitude of the Treaty of Versailles, the political infantility of the German people, the brutal penury induced by economic depression, and a skillful Nationalist propaganda were chief agencies through which this people was again brought to believe in reaction.

1932. Down the streets in any German town you wish comes a military band accompanying a few sol-

diers or policemen. The horses champ on the bits and dance sideways, the drums boom, the bugles reach to the heart of all the children and servant girls within hearing. What is this crowd that walks with them? Youths and girls? Unemployed with nothing to do? Idlers? By no means altogether. These are industrious German citizens who have left their respectable tasks at the call of a higher duty—the duty of proclaiming their political standpoint by marching with the soldiers. Germany follows the band.

Ten years before, such military pomp would have excited their irony or their rage. The change, though characteristic of German mutability, was not inevitable.

The German people came out of the revolution in a great wave of democratic enthusiasm. "No more war" was the slogan of the hour. War, the sinister work of an ancient ruling class, now fortunately eliminated forever! The belief in a new social and political order took on an almost religious fervor among the masses. To be sure, the disillusionment over the Armistice terms, the Peace Treaties, the reparation burden, was considerable and bitter and there were some who sought to profit by the moment to restore the old régime—as in the Kapp Revolt of 1920. But the masses were not with them. Not the humiliation at Versailles but the construction of a new and better society and a fairer State was the preoccupation of the hour. Socialists, Liberals and even Conservatives really never doubted that this State would be "social." It would incorporate a measure of justice and mercy and wisdom such as never before had been seen on earth.

Germany had had enough of war!

There was a gulf between the generations. The old were conservative and patriotic, the youth radical and pacifistic. The astonishing Social-Democratic success in the election to the National Assembly in 1919 was largely due to the votes of young people of the same age as those who twelve years later swelled the legions of the reactionary demagogue, Adolf Hitler!

At that time, the vote seemed astonishing. Out of some thirty million votes cast, the Socialists and Democrats alone received over nineteen and a half millions, and with their Catholic allies, no less than twenty-five and a half millions. The Republicans could have done anything they wished! They could have abolished the old institutions and created new ones of their own, they could have filled the key positions with faithful followers and eliminated the hostile and the doubtful, they could have gone far toward socializing and democratizing business and possession. Yet they did none of these. A socializing commission was appointed but it came to nothing. The reasons for such paralysis were lack of plan, lack of courage, and lack of that unity which Germans find it so difficult to realize save under pressure from without. And the attacks from right and left, the semi-insubordination of the generals and the repeated Communist insurrections, made any radical innovations seem dangerous.

Gradually, as internal disillusion swelled, the pressure from without became more irritating. What about the Fourteen Points? Had Wilson swindled Germany? After all, the Germans had dismissed the Kaiser, inaugurated the "freest Republic in the world." Why should they be punished for whatever

faults the disowned Imperial rulers might have committed? The German people fought the war in the honest conviction that it was defending itself against Western envy and Russian barbarism. What justification could there be for these monstrous and apparently unending reparations? Had not Germany been stripped bare as a winter hedge? And since the Treaty of Versailles implied Germany's "war guilt" as the basis for reparations, the war-guilt problem inevitably became of immense importance. Conservative and Socialist joined hands here, for, it was argued, if only the war guilt lie be refused, the reason for further payments would be destroyed. At Versailles Count Brockdorff-Rantzau flatly refused to admit Germany's exclusive guilt. Three years later we find Chancellor Joseph Wirth making the same protest to the foreign press in Berlin. After that time, steady propaganda against the "war guilt lie" was a recognized duty of every German official and of any number of private bodies in addition. The official German version of war origins was made almost obligatory. The Foreign Office passed on moving pictures dealing with this subject; any deviation from the thesis of German innocence failed to pass the censors. It is impossible to overestimate the influence this propaganda exerted in preparing the reaction. For the German revolution had in part been a protest against the conduct of the old leaders in first starting a war and then losing it. But if the responsibility of these leaders was really not so great as that of French and Russians, as they were told, then indeed the November Revolution had been a useless and a destructive outbreak of misplaced passion. Thus the legend later to take shape around

the "November Crime" was really half created by pacifists who wished to rid their country of reparations by fighting the imputation of *exclusive* "war guilt."

Inevitably the Republic, that imitation of a resolute State, lost caste through its failure to get the war burdens lightened. That it tried to do so as few governments ever had, tried to the point of bleeding its middle class to extinction, was hardly even admitted.

Equally dangerous to democracy in Germany was the ambiguity of the revolution. In a material sense, what occurred was no revolution at all. The victors did not even disarm their opponents! But on the plane of ideas it combined two revolutions at once: a democratic revolution that took power away from the feudal agrarian, official and military castes and gave it to the capitalist majority; and a working-class revolution that, leaping over the middle class, poured favors upon the organized manual workers.

Thanks to the influence of social-democracy, the workers in "oppressed Germany" achieved a higher living standard than in "victorious France and Belgium" and furthermore, through the extension of insurance of various kinds, actually realized a high degree of economic security. Yet it is notable that this increasing share in the profits of industry was not made at the expense of capital. The larger industrial combinations grew along with the increased wages; the entire economic life was dominated by a monopolistic set of trusts, groups, cartels and holding companies, the like of which had been seen nowhere else in the world. The Social-Democratic leaders, blinded by their Marxian dogmas, seem to have ac-

cepted and even approved this concentration of wealth and economic power in the hands of the few, with the idea that it led "inevitably" to socialism.

The artisans and small merchants and employees had always been the champions of what little democracy Germany possessed. But what could they do with a State that consciously—one might almost say, deliberately—planned their exploitation for the benefit of organized workmen and organized capital?

The currency inflation was the worst blow to democracy in Germany. The economic superiority of the lower middle class over the manual workers was hardly a question of superior education or wages; it lay primarily in the possession of some productive capital, possession of a house, investments or savings. This economic basis the inflation completely annihilated. A portion of the rich became richer, and soon afterwards the workmen began to improve their standard of living. All the farmers without exception fared well during the currency boom, but the middle class, the professional people, the educated élite, were reduced to potatoes and in many cases, to beggary.

The responsibility lay with the rulers who, on the advice of men like Hugo Stinnes more or less consciously committed the country to a hopeless policy of passive resistance to the French in the Ruhr, in the name of patriotism.

Now the German is a marvelous thinker, but he believes what he is told by his "betters." He was told that "foreigners" were responsible for the inflation by their cruel greedy demands on Germany; he was not told that the German leaders alone could be held

responsible for their lunacy in trying to fight a more powerful opponent with the savings of the middle class, while allowing the large industrialists actually to profit by the fight.

Furthermore, the German does not habitually see what is before his eyes, which accounts for a great many of what are called his deficiencies in taste. When he chooses to see, his taste, as exemplified in show windows and theatrical settings—to quote but a few instances—is second to none. But habitually he prefers to think about matters rather than to look at them, and will gladly debate half an hour about the weather rather than look out of the window. Therefore when the industrialists and their hirelings told him that “Germany’s prosperity” had been destroyed by foreigners and German Socialists, he somehow did not notice the castles with motorcars and the grand style in which the said employers continued to live in spite of their vaunted “penury.”

The result of inflation was a sharp movement away from liberal democracy and toward patriotic reaction. In the elections immediately following currency stabilization, the German Nationalists scored more heavily than at any other time before the reactionary avalanche.

In the years between 1925 and 1929, when Germany was enjoying prosperity on credit, salaries rose steadily and foreign politics fell into partial abeyance. The foreign policy was in the Fulfillment Period and, with the exception of a few ultra-nationalists and their incredible press, chauvinism was low-toned. So long as public opinion could be canalized toward the

pursuit of wealth, the latent xenophobia native to a proud, defeated people hardly appeared upon the surface of things.

But the Republicans were committing a costly error: by their policy of frozen wages and prices and their encouragement of wholesale mechanization of industry, they contributed to produce even during a business boom, a permanent unemployment not unlike the one in Great Britain. The chief victims of this situation were the young people.

These children of disorder, war and inflation, neglected by parents, allowed to grow up unassisted in a world with no sustaining certainty, needed the particular care of society. Instead of which, they, the tender, the unorganized, were the first victims of social readjustment. As they reached the years of activity, they found to their dismay, no places open to them. The young chemist, engineer, teacher, lawyer, doctor, specialist in any branch, even the artisan, found the road blocked by his father and elder brother. In the resulting cut-throat struggle for employment, the inexperienced inevitably lost. And the hatred of the disinherited swelled monstrously—hatred against the father (according to Sigmund Freud, the most fundamental of all hatreds), hatred against a social system that had no place for its young, a system that had accepted from the victorious Allies a Treaty that (according to the Nationalists) inevitably meant the castration of Germanism. Here was splendid material for political radicalism. Without the Versailles Treaty these young men would unquestionably have turned against the economic beneficiaries of the system and perhaps succeeded in eliminating them.

As it was, with sixty percent of each new university graduating class out of work (March, 1932), with over half of all Germans between the ages of sixteen and thirty unemployed, with a dole system that favored the elder jobless at the expense of the (presumably) protected youth, young Germany was an easy victim for the patriotic demagogue.

A new group, the National-Socialists, had the clever idea of uniting the militarism desired by the *Reichswehr*, the anti-Republican hatred of the reactionaries, the anti-Socialist aims popular among the capitalists, with a new, generous, vaguely social fascism.

This group paid to the young that special attention that the State authorities should have given them. And it worked upon their still unformed character with all the art of high powered salesmanship at the service of a so-called Nationalist idea. It succeeded in making them hate foreigners, despise the Republic and its liberal thought, and oppose organized labor, in the name of a higher patriotism. The older generation—the men of Ypres and of the Somme—had generally had enough of militarism; their ears were deaf to war legends. But the pacifism they had learned through awful experience became to their sons an object of scorn. Every people must be trained to arms—said the officers in the *Reichswehr*, most of whom were too young to have heard the explosion of an enemy seventy-five! War again became romantic, an affair not of blood and mud and excrement, but of heroic charges and glorious triumphs. After all, peace had little to offer these embittered lads. At worst, they could but die. “Rather a terrible end than an endless terror!” became their watchword.

Adolf Hitler saw the young Germans and won them to his banner, chiefly because he found them at the moment of their deepest material and spiritual despair. To their empty lives he gave a meaning, however meretricious.

Thanks to such a general situation German youth became dangerously Nationalist and the German middle class hysterically reactionary. Admittedly there were other causes than those enunciated here. The larger capitalists obviously hoped, by supporting the Nationalist-Socialists to stab to death the trade unions and annul the costly privileges of labor. The jobless princes and their monarchical adherents, all the born adorers of class and privilege, clearly sought, by their fight against the "treaty of shame," to creep back into their former place of power and undo the criminal "November revolution." The Army was obviously trying to strengthen militarism among the youth for motives that soldiers throughout the world will understand. But their success would have been questionable except for the fact of new and sudden poverty, nationwide, crushing, stupefying.

Now it is curious that in Germany the world economic depression began to make itself felt at approximately the same time (1929-1930) as the death of Gustav Stresemann and French evacuation of the Rhineland cleared the ground for a vigorous foreign policy. Moreover the depression revealed the danger of the chronic budgetary deficits which had become habitual in the Republic. The *Reichstag* deputies were slow to see the danger, and diminished expenditure was the last thing for which they would vote. Therefore, in order to tidy up the finances, Chancellor

Heinrich Brüning dissolved the defiant *Reichstag* and began to govern under Article 48 of the Constitution, which gives the President and his Chancellor the right to issue Emergency Decrees with the force of laws at any time when the safety of the *Reich* is endangered. These measures can be nullified by a *Reichstag*, but in troubled times the Chancellor can govern as he wills so long as he keeps the confidence of the President. Few persons seriously believe that in the summer of 1930 public order or safety would have been obviously disturbed or endangered even had the Chancellor's finance bills been refused. Yet without this Brüning's action in invoking Article 48 was unconstitutional, and the responsibility for the first apparent breach in the Weimar Constitution lay with the Catholic Chancellor, and not with the aristocratic reactionaries who were to follow him.

In yet another field the same gentleman will have to answer to history. In his zeal to utilize world distress for the narrowly German purpose of revising the Versailles Treaty, the Chancellor accepted the questionable view that the Treaty itself, with its reparation payments (and not, of course, the German refusal to abide by it!) was the chief cause of the world crisis. Now, this opinion, which the Basle Committee of 1931 did not deny, confirmed a view that the Germans had already heard from the Nationalists and from Adolf Hitler without altogether believing it. But proclaimed from that Sinai whereon Heinrich Brüning habitually dwelt, it could be nothing less than divinely revealed truth!

Thereafter, there was no holding the Nationalist. Whereas some years before, peace propaganda had

held the field and war enthusiasm been propounded only in closed circles, from now on this was reversed. Patriots openly worked up hatred of Frenchmen and Poles and pacifism began to be risky.

Pre-eminent among the dispensers of hatred was Alfred Hugenberg. To put the German clock back to 1914 was the aim of this man's life. Like so many of the passionate advocates of Prussian aristocracy, he was neither aristocrat nor Prussian. He was successively an official, an agricultural expert, a leader in agrarian banking, a manager in the great firm of Krupp.

During the war he struggled manfully against "premature peace" or "peace without annexation." After the war he became the leader of unvarnished reaction and, before the rise of Adolf Hitler, the most outstanding person in the reactionary camp. Thanks largely to his control of the greatest publicity organization in Germany, Hugenberg obtained control of a hundred and fifty-odd newspapers, and through his news agency, the *Telegraphen Union*, supplied vast material to about 200 provincial sheets too poor to keep correspondents in the capital. With this organization in his hand, the small official from Hanover, whose waving mustaches made him look surprisingly like a seal, could wield a power greater than that of Beaverbrook in England or Hearst, Curtis or Scripps-Howard in the United States.

At the end of 1927, a lucky chance gave him the opportunity of acquiring the control of the *Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*, the famous *Ufa*, the leading moving picture producer and theater owner in the land.

In 1931, Hugenberg represented the legitimist reaction in the attempt to form a united reactionary front with the Hitlerites at Bad Harzburg, unsuccessful because Hitler wanted too much. Sure of his demagogic superiority over his unprepossessing rival, he claimed undisputed leadership for himself. Hugenberg, a little discomfited, had to retire, but when a year later, a new cabinet was formed, it represented, not the pseudo-revolutionary ideals of Adolf Hitler, but the sober conservatism of Alfred Hugenberg.

This man fought without romanticism, without great wit or intelligence, without fire, but with a cold determination that is unique in German politics. His program? Conservative! Against Poland and against France. Against reparations and the Versailles Treaty. For a greater Germany. For Kaiser and nobility, for the Army and the bureaucracy. For the economic privileges of the Prussian *Junkers* and the West German industrialists! The better to carry on this fight, he lived almost like a miser. His millions were left in the firm and devoted exclusively to the great cause of German Toryism. His internal enemies were socialism, labor, democracy, the German Republic—and the hysteria of Adolf Hitler.

How he worked became apparent in the output of his moving picture company, the *Ufa*. In Hugenberg's hands, the *Ufa* became a refined instrument of reactionary propaganda. The studios at New Babelsberg became the heirs and disseminators of the dear old spirit of nearby Potsdam. Wise to the fact that one cannot make a nation reactionary against its will, Hugenberg set out to make it want to be reactionary. Here and there, in the midst of pictures dealing with

this, that and everything, appeared one that glorified the German past. Not the revolutionary past of course, but the Monarchist, Military, Prussian, servile past.

Gradually more and more military pictures were pressed into the news reels, with captions explaining that Germany—poor Germany!—could not have all these splendid battleships and tanks because of the oppressive treaties. Other producers found that militarism had begun to pay and followed the *Ufa*. Whereas the Government censors carefully suppressed any historical moving pictures that might disturb German diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, Belgium or France, they specifically allowed “the portrayal with historical accuracy of Polish infringement and injustice.” Germany’s total innocence of causing the war, Germany’s unjust disarmament, Germany’s lost territories—which must be regained! Germany’s privations under the war tribute, all these subjects began to be ever more lavishly served to the movie fans.

Gradually, “national awakening” spread over the country. “Sleepers,” who had dreamed that Germans might still be moderately happy even if enchained, began to prick up their ears and lift protesting voices. Out of every little hole of an office in the provinces, teachers, lawyers, judges, officials, parsons, who had somehow managed to swim over from the old régime and whom the mild Republic had neglected to eliminate, began openly to propound that reaction they had long bred and nourished in private.

By about 1931, the need for a “strong foreign policy” and a truculent attitude toward France and Poland had become public property. Few protested

against the inordinate political influence of the Army and the spread of its ideals to the civilian population. Pacifism, international conciliation and co-operation, personal liberty, as ideals simply faded before re-nascent Prussian conceptions of autocracy (disguised as leadership), blind obedience, patriotic frenzy, militarism. An entire nation's youth began to play soldiery and they were encouraged and assisted by the various authorities, with the obvious intention of preparing a future when, treaties or not, the Germans would again become "capable of defence"—ready, trained, not for the stern heroic tasks of human progress (a conception at which these new Germans merely laughed), but for the task of collective sacrifice to national vainglory.

In such an atmosphere the maintenance of the democratic Republic was obviously superfluous. Germany followed the band.

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CHAPTER X

SOCIALIST WINDMILLS

"You may keep people satisfied on a lower living standard but only if you first make them stupider."

DR. HUGO ECKENER.

"We in Germany are moving rapidly toward a lower living standard and I am glad of it."

WERNER SOMBART.

MY FRIEND the banker is an Israelite. His nose is of the super-Hittite sort, his gestures are Oriental in amplitude, his manners are correctly cosmopolitan and his business interests are scattered throughout half a dozen countries. Yet to a somewhat bewildered gathering in a drawing-room in plutocratic Berlin, he unctuously explained how for years he had been a heavy subsidizer of the National-Socialists, a group of people whose war cry runs: "Germany awake and perish the Jew." No one who knows the banker could possibly imagine him subject to suicidal mania. Why therefore did he seek to strengthen a movement that wrote upon its boldest banner his own extinction as financier and Jew? A cynic might suggest that he hoped by his assistance to purchase a physical and financial immunity for himself in the expected Third Empire. But he did not say that. He explained that he was supporting his avowed despisers because they were "friendly to capital." He would, he said,

assist the very devil, could the latter be persuaded to lead a fight on that most ruinous influence in the contemporary world, "Marxism." By this statement, the banker further demonstrated his solidarity with the majority of non-Jewish German capitalists and affirmed himself a true German patriot despite his bank accounts in New York, Paris, London and Amsterdam. For the campaign against "Marxism" was for a time the most widespread of all the canned formulae of patriotic German reactionaries.

Benito Mussolini, by dint of sheer repetition, managed to convince an innocent world that his full-maned Black Shirts saved Italy from Bolshevism, a statement even less self-evident than that the Italian Army destroyed Austria-Hungary at the battle of Vittorio Veneto. In both cases the enemy had virtually collapsed before the attack started. The German reactionaries wanted to go down the avenues of time as the victors of the "battle against 'Marxism.'" And besides, this arresting war cry distracted attention from the somewhat unsocial character of their real aim.

As might be expected, the meaning of "Marxism" was not altogether clear, for in the jargon of the reaction, "Marxism" was applied to anything from free abortion, atonal music and the flat roofs of the latest architecture, to the learned exegesis of the doctrines of Karl Marx. The banker—who has no particular objection to abortion—often explained that by "Marxism" he means socialism, which brought about the ruin of post-war Germany, the world economic depression and constituted the greatest threat to Occidental civilization. Out of this heated utterance it

resulted that the "Marxism" he was paying the National-Socialists for destroying, had nothing in common with the music of Schoenberg or Hindemith. Clearly he was attacking some sort of economic bogey which he believed to be dangerous. What was it?

Obviously, not "Socialist rule," for the excellent reason that there never was any in Germany. By this I do not mean to imply that the Social-Democrats were not influential in German politics. It is, however, a fact that for over two decades their leaders were "revisionists" who could not properly be considered Marxists, for they themselves were the most bitter enemies of the truly "Marxian" communists.

If by "Marxism" the social-democratic manner of governing be understood, then the fight against it was even less comprehensible. For in the first place, the Social-Democrats were never in a position to govern alone, and in the second, they never caused the adoption of any important portion of real socialism. Or are we to understand by "Marxism" an extension of an already existing system of social insurance?

In his first statement as Chancellor, Franz von Papen attacked and repudiated the "Charity State" left by his predecessors. Yet, *nota bene*, this "Charity State" was no invention of the Socialists, but a legacy left over from the simon-pure Prussianism that dominated Germany before the war. Under William II and the *Junker* clique, whose direct heirs Franz von Papen and his friends might properly claim to be, the "Charity State" was organized and held up as a model to other countries. It was indeed considered a genial institution whereby progressive Germany could expect to cut the ground from under the feet of real

"Marxism." Moreover, since, under a system of universal conscription, all Germans were soldiers, it was considered patriotic to allow the masses at least such material well being as would allow them to develop into physically sound recruits.

The Republic merely extended the "Charity State" along existing lines. Even those expanded social benefits which successive German cabinets under the influence of the Social-Democrats granted to labor, came within the field of ideas which had been thrashed out in Imperial Germany. This is also true of the unemployment insurance which became the reddest rag to the reactionary German bull.

The same may be said of the extension of public ownership to recognized public utilities. Long before the war any number of gas works and power plants and street-car lines were in the hands of the cities. Under the Republic this tendency was merely prolonged. Often enough there was no economic justification for the extension of public ownership, but this had nothing to do with "Marxism." Be it remembered that the German railways were nationalized by no less a person than Prince Bismarck.

Probably of all post-war German institutions, the "wage schedule system" (*Tariflohnsystem*) was the one that came closest to real socialism. In the desire to avoid strikes, collective bargaining was made official, with the State as the supreme arbiter. This considerably extended the sovereignty of the State in economic questions. So long as the Social-Democrats could manage to secure the position of Labor Minister for a party member, the German trade unions made the best of a good thing and the workmen unques-

tionably managed to maintain a standard relatively higher than that of the "white collar proletariat."

"Aha! It is admitted therefore that the German Republic did intervene in business for the benefit of a certain economic class. What better demonstration of 'Marxism' do you require?"

Well, if this was socialism, then the conclusion is inescapable that not the workmen but the capitalists were the most striking partisans of "Marxism" in Germany. For it was they who most conspicuously enjoyed the "artificial sunshine" of the German Government in the matter of finances. Before, during and after the war, private German undertakings received from the State in the form of uncollectible loans, guarantees and subventions (not to speak of revenue tariffs), vast sums at more or less regular intervals. The largest single subvention—something under two hundred million dollars—was granted to the Ruhr industries as indemnity for their alleged damages during the Franco-Belgian occupation, notwithstanding the fact that it was the biggest of these industrialists, Hugo Stinnes, who had helped provoke the occupation. The second largest financial gift to private enterprise occurred with the consolidation of the insolvent German banks in 1931, the cost of which would seem to have been about one hundred million dollars.

In consideration of such indisputable gifts from the taxpayers' pockets, this sort of "Marxism" turns out to be something whose benefits have been shared by owners and workers alike. In theory, German capital and labor both accepted the class struggle as outlined by Karl Marx, with unexceptional thorough-

ness and rigidity. In practice these two class enemies more often joined hands in an unholy alliance to exploit the general consumer. This exploitation was on the whole accepted and even furthered by the Republic. Here lay a real ground for legitimate protest, but not from one of the "unholy Allies." The struggle waged by a large number of German capitalists against the Republican State, thanks to whose financial assistance perhaps half of all large banks and industries in Germany avoided open bankruptcy, betrayed an astounding cynicism.

Argue with a German capitalist on this point, pin him down to facts and he soon switches to another track.

The "Marxists" preached class warfare—he would say. Theoretically, but in practice they ran on the basis of an extremely broad patriotism. German reactionaries would never be able to repay the debt they owed to Social-Democrats like Ebert and Noske and Scheidemann and Hermann Mueller for saving the Republic from really class-conscious Communists who would have made a second Soviet Russia of it. The Social-Democratic deputies voted the war credits almost to a man until they realized that heavy industry was holding out for a German victory with annexations simply because its mouth was watering for the coal and iron mines in neighboring Belgium, Luxemburg and France. And if the workmen preached class warfare, the owners practiced it. The fight on all forms of social insurance at a time of world depression, the determined effort to crush the trade unions, what were these but class struggle? And—most important—what other word could be applied to the

assistance given by the rich to the National-Socialists, a party which made the suppression of labor influence in politics and business a major part of its strategy? In many sections of Germany rich landowners dodged the established wage scale by the simple device of hiring unemployed, who returned to the farms from the towns, during the economic depression at about half the regular wages.

As one of them, a count with a great name, admitted to me, "We great landowners all wage class warfare, but I am the only one in this part of the country who admits it."

"At least, you concede that the Marxists are traitors!" This was another common piece of propaganda. Behind it are various shades of meaning. It is meant that the workmen made the revolution, the infamous "November crime," which took the rule out of the hands of a few groups and "for a time" gave it to the German people. A half truth for there was, strictly speaking, no revolution in Germany. The people took the power only after it had fallen from the hands of the princes and generals, and used it with such tolerance that within a few years these disinherited ruling classes were able to snatch most of it back for themselves. The "stab-in-the-back" fairy-tale, according to which the undefeated Army had to submit because the people betrayed it, is one of the quaintest legends ever concocted to account for heroic failure. It was the generals who first weakened in Germany.

"Anyway, the Marxists are a lot of spineless pacifists," it was continually stated.

Were they? It is true that they considered the feeding of the living Germans more important than im-

mediate Treaty revision. It is a fact that they did not like armies nor crave for a new war. But when it was not a question of words but of deeds, when there was real German land to be defended against foreign aggressors as, in their opinion, in Upper Silesia against the Poles, or in the Ruhr and the Rhineland against the French troops and the German separatists, then it was these "spineless workmen" who acted while the professional patriots talked and the industrialists thought powerfully about saving their property. These are hard words but there is evidence for them. Ask the French Government to publish the list of German industrialists who were ready to make an agreement with them for a separate Rhineland Republic. The world would be astonished! Yet while the owners schemed to save their mines and steel mills, the workmen, many of them Communists, actually carried out that campaign of sabotage and passive resistance ordered by Berlin at cost of their skins. An anecdote from that period is significant:

A friend of mine, whom we will call Walter, was a chief sabotage agent in the Ruhr. As an ex-soldier and a chemist, he was familiar with high explosives. It was decided to dynamite the chief lock in the Rhine-Herne Canal, along which the French Army of Occupation floated toward France the barges filled with coal from the Ruhr mines. Walter appealed for volunteers to the middle-class young men in the United Patriotic Societies under General von der Goltz. If caught, they would pay with their lives. Eight students promised but on the night planned it rained heavily; not one of them appeared. Furious at the useless risk and trouble, Walter went to the head-

quarters of the Communist miners' union at Dortmund. Could they provide him with assistants who would carry the "stuff" the necessary half mile? They could. At the hour appointed, six Communist miners (called *Kumpels*) appeared at the canal. The charge was laid and with a roar, the great lock rose into the air while the canal ran itself dry. It took the occupying troops weeks to repair it.

And in Upper Silesia? According to the testimony of a leader of the *Oberland Corps*, admittedly the pick of the German volunteers, the behavior of the German workmen in the struggle was impeccably patriotic. Can the same be said of the coal owners? I had it on the authority of the Upper Silesian author, August Scholtis, that before the plebiscite, the chief German magnates of Upper Silesia, under the leadership of Count Hubert von Thiele-Winkler, the richest man in the district, met in the castle of the Pole, Count Oppersdorf and passed a resolution wherein they expressed the idea that Germany had better lose *all* than sacrifice a *part* of Upper Silesia. For in the latter case, the value of the industrial properties to their rich German owners would be diminished. Scholtis went so far as to say that part of Upper Silesia was unnecessarily lost owing to the greed of the German magnates.

There is plenty of evidence of this sort available. On the basis of it, one reaches the conclusion that if anyone had the right to accuse the German Social-Democrats of being unpatriotic, it was not the German capitalists who waged the "fight against Marxism." Without the patriotism of the "Marxists," Germany

would hardly have hoped to escape more serious mutilation.

The final charge against the Social-Democrats was that wherever possible they instituted "party rule." The prejudice against party rule was one of the strangest kinks in the German brain. It revealed the fact that the Germans had not understood the essence of democracy or of government. A politically awakened people is no more than the sum of its political parties and party rule is neither more nor less than the will of the majority. The claim to stand "above the parties" is therefore either inept or it is camouflage. For so soon as any practical matter is under consideration, difference of opinion will emerge. This difference of opinion is the basis of party existence. In Germany the word "non-partisan" or "super-partisan" practically always turned out to mean *militaristic, reactionary, anti-Republican*. The former Imperial Government was, we are told, "above parties." In point of fact it was the practical possession of a single class, who managed to do just about anything they pleased. Naturally, they claimed to be non-partisan. Yet despite this patent warning, almost the first act of Fritz Ebert as President was to declare that he too stood "above parties." Therefore, instead of carrying out the will of those who elected him, he apparently felt the duty of protecting the Republic's enemies. Just why Ebert should have imagined it to be the duty of the President of the German Republic to do anything but suppress the reactionaries, the generals and the former sovereigns, is one of those mysteries that lie so thick around the Republic's decline. Ebert created a tradi-

tion that enabled Paul von Hindenburg, two months after his re-election to the presidency by the Liberals and Social-Democrats, in April, 1932, to hand over the Government to the very groups who opposed his candidacy. It is true that the Social-Democrats did, to some extent, fill the administration with their partisans. But in proportion to its numbers and length of time in office, the party put in, not too many of its adherents, but too few. It continued to allow the régime's enemies to occupy key positions in the administration. Thereby it endangered the Republic.

None of the charges made against "Marxism" really held water. The capitalist reaction was deliberately fighting windmills, hoping thereby to stir up enough dust to hide the mortal blow it hoped to deal its real enemy. This enemy was organized labor. The reaction hoped to re-establish the open shop and thereafter force wages down to the point where profits were again permanently easy. It expected to cut down the social insurance. For this purpose it supported the National-Socialists who promised the destruction of the social-democratic labor unions.

Behind the campaign against "Marxism" was further a more or less veiled struggle against the principle of democracy. For in an industrial country like Germany, organized labor might at any time secure an absolute majority in the *Reichstag*. This labor vote was mildly socialistic—it believed, that is, in the gradual elimination of the major differences in income and in the spread of public ownership to the key industries. Some of this might conceivably be put into effect. Therefore the capitalists sought to insure themselves against what might occur (and

meanwhile cut down their depression losses) by boldly proclaiming that it had already happened! What they really wanted was a permanent rule in their own interest supported by an armed militia—something like the Italian system. So far as labor was concerned, they sought to turn the clock back to where it stood about the middle of the nineteenth century. Therefore many of them, including some Jews, contributed money to openly reactionary movements considered “friendly to capital.”

In April, 1931, a number of German industrial magnates visited Soviet Russia. They were not impressed by communism as a system but returned enthusiastic concerning the unlimited authority of the Soviet Government over the workmen. This was the condition many of them dreamed of for Germany. For the German owners long since ceased to believe in anything so rigorous as Western capitalism. That “wasteful” system, with its cheapening of wares through competition, Germany—they liked to say—had long outgrown. The ideal modern form in their eyes was a combination of monopoly and subsidy. The owners should lock themselves in the higher rooms of the economic structure and throw the key out of the window. It was then up to the State to maintain them in their rightful place on top. They counted on the dust clouds, thrown up by their charge on Socialist windmills, to conceal this piece of impertinence.

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CHAPTER XI

DEFENDING PSEUDO-CAPITALISM

GRADUALLY, the overwhelming majority of post-war Germans became sick of capitalism as they knew it, but what they knew was not capitalism in its liberal sense. It had almost nothing to do with the system economists have in mind under that name. Liberal capitalism either never existed in Germany or died some fifty years before the period described. What existed was at most a pseudo-capitalism, the sort of hybrid that would normally develop in a country of bureaucrats and soldiers, with the most easily ruled and organized people in the world.

This German system was a stiff framework of trusts and monopolies which substituted technical ability for economic utility and perpetuated privilege without equivalent risk. In the last analysis it relied for power upon its control of the State, for this enabled it not only to maintain its monopolies, but in times of crisis to stretch a hungry hand into the pockets of the taxpayers. From time to time, as the State came more or less under the control of the workmen or the consumers, the owners drew back upon something like real capitalistic principles and clamored loudly for the cessation of State interference in business, but this was mere bluff. So soon as the danger was over the enthusiasm for the bold adventurous capitalism of former days simmered down to the time-honored

belief in security, monopoly, and subsidy. "They preached a system free from State interference and built it up on State assistance." (M. J. Bonn, *Vossische Zeitung*, May 22, 1932.)

Some time about 1929 or 1930, German pseudo-capitalism shifted its ally in the great game of making the country safe for monopolists. The typical German business man has never rejoiced in his independence and personal risk. He has always disliked competition and preferred compromise and alliance to battle with the rivals. What he wanted was a system in which private risk had been socialized while private benefits were maintained. Competition as a regulator of price would be cut out and the lucky few reign supreme over a public that could obtain the necessary wares from none but them.

Yet whereas in the business field the German leaders personified safety first, in the field of politics they were as bold gamblers as ever left their fortunes upon the tables at Monte Carlo.

"Ladies and gentlemen, make your bets—*faites vos jeux!*" So called the voice of the unseen croupier in the ears of the omnipotent bank and corporation bosses. Once more they laid their stake. But this time it was really serious. In 1923, they staked the fortunes of the middle class, the savings of a century—and lost them. In 1930, it was their own fortunes, their control over the State, their prestige, their self-esteem that they laid upon the table. If they lost this time, out they would go into the historical shuffle with the robber baron, the sea-captain of the Spanish Main and the medieval corn engrosser, for their sort of capitalism would become extinct in Germany.

A pretty picture, I swear: the great industrialist, Fritz Thyssen, monarch of coal and iron, who rumor declared all but became French before the war in order to preserve his father's iron mines in Normandy, hand in hand with that arch-revolutionary, Adolf Hitler! The great capitalists of this twentieth century fraternally linked with that National-Socialist party whose expressed economic ideals were those of the Renaissance or even earlier!

Yet this was no real ground for surprise. These were no twentieth century magnates. One could not judge them by their glittering machinery, their swift and silent organizations, their command over the latest discoveries and formulae of science. Their minds, their emotions were as medieval—or nearly—as the ancient castles so many of them chose to inhabit. What was their ideal? Wait a moment!

"The industrial control was exercised, in part directly by the State, but largely also through privileged corporations and trading companies. High duties on imports were resorted to . . . in the interest of the national production. Commercial treaties were a principal object of diplomacy, the end in view being to exclude the competition of other nations in foreign markets, whilst in the home market as little room as possible was given for the introduction of anything but raw materials from abroad."

What nicer description of Germany under capitalism in the year 1932 could you ask? Yet this quotation refers to large parts of Europe between the years 1500 and 1800 and is taken from the article on *Mercantilism* in the latest Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Eager for recognition by feudal nobility, the big

German industrialists also stepped into the twentieth century "clad in shining armor." When, after the war, this unusual costume attracted public attention, the confused but wily owners sought to carry it off by claiming such medieval garb to be the fashion of the coming age!

The alliance of such reactionary-hearted capitalism with the guild system apparently desired by the disinherited middle class was no anachronism, for both belong to approximately the same epoch.

Every alliance is aimed at some one. The intended victims of this one were the German manual workers.

No one could have been less prejudiced in their choice of partners than the German industrial owners. Having lost the war, they quickly came to terms with the new ruling class of workmen, as a prerequisite to their great work of diddling the Allies out of reparations at the expense of the German middle class. The result was the economic destruction of that class, a process that was continued with subtle perseverance right up to the world business depression.

This process the silly workers tolerated and often applauded, thinking it a magnificent step to eventual socialism. Had not their prophet, Karl Marx, in his later days announced the ultimate triumph of the working class to be inevitable?

German industry came out of the inflation with vastly widened and sharply concentrated holdings, but no ready capital. During the former period the industrialists had become independent of the banks and the new feeling of freedom and power was slightly intoxicating. Henceforth they were, like Henry Ford, determined to be their own financiers. This meant

squeezing from a thoroughly impoverished people profits sufficient not only to set off the high price of capital, but to pile up large reserves as well. This abnormal gain could not be achieved by normal methods, hence abnormal ones must be used. These were high protective tariffs, the forging of an ironclad system of trusts, monopolies and cartels, and State subsidies. Then, as ever, the mass of consumers failed to see through the system in time. But they were impoverished and even their *all* was not enough for the producers' need. This need was doubly great for just about this time the German industrial leaders fell completely under the influence of what was called the "American business miracle."

In the years 1926 to 1928 the United States literally swarmed with German businessmen, engineers, bankers who came to admire with dripping mouths the new mammoth machinery in the giant American factories. What power-worshiper could resist the temptation? To equip themselves with similar pet monsters the visitors borrowed without stint. But the Germans, even more than the Americans, forgot one thing: that not cost but return is the decisive factor in capitalist business. The new machines were efficient, all right, but only on the basis of about eighty percent capacity production. The German market could hardly be widened and other countries protected what they possessed with great persistence. Soon it was found that at the rate of demand the new "laborless" machines were producing more expensively than the old-fashioned plant with many hands that had been scrapped. Worse, such efficient machinery weakened the domestic power of consump-

tion by turning millions into the streets. For the first time in its history, Germany, thanks to its ruthless scrapping and replacement, found itself facing a real structural unemployment which the utterly inelastic character of the wage system (controlled by the Government) made particularly hard to combat. According to the monthly magazine *Die Tat*, more than a million "hands" were thrown on the streets by technical improvements in the five years between 1926 and 1931, while at the same time production rose by twenty percent. In addition to this million, seven hundred thousand young people who had reached the years of activity failed to find absorption into the productive process. This meant that within this short time at least two million German workmen were dispossessed by more expensive machinery, that consumed nothing but itself and fuel and a little oil. Yet here were the machines and here, alas, were the debts that had been made to buy them.

Borrowing was contagious. Tripping along behind the various private companies came the German states and cities, with extended hands into which irresponsible American bankers were only too happy to press those apparently inexhaustible American "savings." Civil servants bettered their economic status, all salaries rose. New schools, new hospitals, new railway equipment, new swimming pools and stadiums and parks and town halls made new Germany seem affluent beyond the dreams of its neighbors. All was accomplished with "other people's money." "The finest poor-house in the world," some one called the country.

Public budgets were as unbalanced as the popular

mind. Why should the various public bodies from the *Reich* down balance their books when the private budgets were in permanent deficit? All warnings of the Agent General for Reparation Payments, S. Parker Gilbert, were disregarded, for, in the first place, why save money to pay reparations? In the second place, defeated Germans naturally required a higher living standard than victorious French and Belgians—or so it was said. In the third place, what business was it of Gilbert's, anyway? With public expenses out of all proportion to real income, with terrific public and private debts, but with a headful of reckless optimism, Germany sailed into the world crisis. When the pilots finally awoke to their danger and sought to reef, it was too late. One after another their main-sails were simply stripped from the masts by the swelling tempest. Before long it was a case of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. According to all precedent, that hindmost was bound to be the great jackass, the consuming masses, consisting of the impoverished middle class and the small peasants, but this time the donkey fooled them.

In the inflation period the middle class was dragged down from its position by the simple process of expropriating its savings. But the powerful capitalists possessed borrowed paper money to burn, and allowed some of it to trickle through their fingers into the hands of the workmen, who being sure of employment, kept reasonably quiet. The first reactionary wave started among the middle classes. In 1923 there was much talk of counter-revolution and, blind as ever, many of the disinherited hoped for the creation of a dictatorship under the influence of the well de-

serving big business men—Hugo Stinnes' friend, Friedrich Minoux, was the most popular candidate. That some such plan failed to materialize was due only to the belated but rapid currency stabilization.

Stabilization saved the middle class from physical extinction and absolute pauperism. Something had to be done for them politically and the various "revalorization laws" were a sop to their feelings. The great work of transferring most of their holdings to the safes of the big capitalists had been done and could not be reversed. The figures tell the tale: over half a million Germans owned property valued at between 30,000 and 50,000 marks in 1913, as against 216,000 in 1925; nearly four hundred thousand with between 50,000 and 100,000 marks in 1913, as against 136,000 in 1925; over two hundred and fifty thousand who owned from 100,000 to 500,000 before the war, as against 71,000 in 1925.

Embittered, unbalanced, thirsting for revenge, the expropriated ought, according to orthodox socialist theory, to have merged in the great proletariat; in point of fact they refused and kept their social identity. They clung to their middle-class habits, manner of life, intellectual, emotional and political attitude. So long as they could keep employed they remained quiet. But when, even in comparatively prosperous times, the structural unemployment caused by the megalomania of the industrialists began to cut them off from jobs, they listened to radical voices preaching hatred and revolt. Had they been real proletarians, they would have followed the voice of Moscow. As it was, just as in Italy, they yielded to the wooing of the German fascists. The *Reichstag*

election of September, 1930, revealed the National-Socialists as the largest party in the *Reichstag*, a huge, well-organized, thoroughly instructed army with blind faith in its leader Adolf Hitler and the romantic medieval doctrines he and his somewhat hazy-headed lieutenants propounded.

The peasants, who also began to suffer the consequences of a system that coolly sacrificed them to the larger landlords, in so far as they were not Catholic, fell easy prey to agitators who told them in so many words that they, and not the smart city workers, were the nation's chosen. The middle class in the towns obviously agreed with anyone who would appeal to them as the "true Germans." Everything else had failed, socialism, capitalism, internationalism. Therefore back to the good old times before the French Revolution, to an "organic society," with middle-class industry, plenty of small undertakings, purely national business, economic self-sufficiency, with the State in the hands of a small group of self-appointed yet benevolent rulers who would suppress the exaggerated nineteenth century individualism in favor of some half government-controlled, half guild inspired "commonwealth." As "socialism" it was a harmless misnomer. The Hitlerite leader, Gregor Strasser, made this clear to the radio listeners (June 14, 1932):

"By socialism we understand governmental measures for the protection of the individual or the group against any sort of exploitation. The taking over of the railways by the State, of the street-cars, power plants, and gas works by the municipalities; the emancipation of the peasants by Baron von Stein; and the incorporation of the guild system into the State; the

Prussian officer's system of selection by achievement; the incorruptibility of the German official; the old walls, the town hall, the cathedral of the free Imperial city—these are all expressions of *German socialism* as we conceive and demand it." In other words, a glorification of the past as reconstructed by patriotic victims of a gigantic economic and political transformation they were incapable of either understanding or liking, especially when it had destroyed their social, and threatened to blot out their physical, existence. A dream of German pre-Raphaelites, but a dream that had the organized force of nearly two-fifths of Germany behind it.

As the country sank into the mire of a depression which its own defiant foreign policy rendered more hopeless, the struggle for the available funds became more acute. Crippled by debts and the calling of short term credits, the capitalists thirsted for the funds of the State. Yet in such a period, the tax returns, despite drastic, but ever tardy savings in the budget, dropped fantastically. The number of the unemployed climbed from million to million. The insurance funds were a drop on a hot stove and the larger burden fell directly upon the taxpayers. This was a second lien on the public funds. A third group of claimants for assistance were the large landowners, the grain-growing feudal nobility, or *Junkers*.

Theirs was the class that had ruled Prussia until the revolution. Then, with the power to divide the great estates and with the future of the *Junkers* in their hands, the Republicans for some reason spared their worst enemies.

Off and on for about a century the *Junkers* had lived

on State support. They had come to take it for granted that, in one way or another, by tariffs or direct subventions, the State would guarantee them a living "according to their station." Yet East Germany was not favored by nature. Despite heroic use of fertilizer its fields cannot produce grain at the world price. But since the landowners represented the former ruling class and since one of their number, Paul von Hindenburg, was President of the Republic, and since they knew what they wanted, they actually persuaded the impoverished Government to grant them fantastic tariffs and direct subsidies and reduction of the interest they had undertaken to pay on their mortgages.

As the State money ran ever shorter, it was obvious that someone would soon have to do without. The *Junkers* and industrial pseudo-capitalists were natural allies against organized labor, but the unemployed were, for the most part, solidly entrenched in huge trade unions of unquestioned power, behind which stood the large Social-Democratic Party and with it the Catholic Center. To fight such a host under a democratic system, the owning groups needed a mass of their own. This army they found in the organized middle-class adherents of National-Socialism. For Hitler also was absolutely opposed to "Marxism" and all that the workmen stood for. In alliance with Hitler there appeared to be a chance for the capitalists, not only to grab the biggest handful of the public funds and to reduce wages, but to eliminate the influence of organized labor from the State altogether.

The National-Socialists claimed to be hostile to Big Business. But they were anything but a homogeneous mass: united by nothing but their hatred of the exist-

ing order. Doubtless their leaders could be taught to appreciate the privileges of association with men and women of wealth and charm. If the mass became dangerous, it could, perhaps, be divided. If not, one could always seek other allies.

It was a gamble but the Germans had always been gamblers. They gambled in the World War. To the *Junkers*, the National-Socialists represented the last chance. Sooner or later, under a democratic government, the unprofitable big estates were bound to be split up. Not only the workmen but the peasants were sick of supporting them. But the Army wanted German-raised grain supplies which only the big estates could produce and did not mind laying the additional cost on the taxpayers. Therefore industrial and business capitalists and big landowners gave the National-Socialists consistent support. Thanks to this financial assistance, Adolf Hitler's legions came to absorb practically all that was left of the farmers and middle class in Protestant Germany. The party swept along in triumphal procession from election to election, until it was the strongest political unit in the land. It had cost the rich a pretty sum but it seemed to be worth it. Pseudo-capitalism and unprofitable agriculture might hope for a new lease on life.

CHAPTER XII

BUYING THE REACTION

"Workman, workman, what will become of you,
When the Ehrhardt Brigade stands ready for the fight?
The Brigade of Ehrhardt knocks everything to bits.
Woe to you, woe to you, you workman son of a bitch."

From the Nationalist *Ehrhardt Song*.

"The millions of Germans who voted for Hitler certainly did not vote for high finance, nor for the land-owning aristocracy, nor for the fallen princes. They are expecting the Third Empire and not a reaction."

MARCEL RAY.

TO A considerable extent the German reaction was purchased. When, shortly after the war, the propertied classes in Italy found themselves economically menaced by the embittered ex-soldiers, they found in Mussolini an instrument for saving their money at the sacrifice of Italian democracy. The Fascist Party which they subsidized and in which their sons enrolled, overthrew the feeble liberal State and installed a permanent party dictatorship on Russian lines. Only in this case the ruling party represented, not the industrial proletariat, but the rich. Almost the first act of the new régime was to reduce the inheritance tax on large fortunes.

There is not the slightest doubt but that the ruling spirits of the National-Socialist German Labor Party (in German the *N.S.D.A.P.*) were prepared, if

given the chance, to establish just such a permanent party dictatorship as existed in Italy, and with approximately the same groups as beneficiaries. Their socialism was about as subversive of the established economic order as Mussolini's fascism. When, in the words of Gregor Strasser, a very prominent leader, they spoke of "undoing the French Revolution," they meant primarily the destruction of self-government and the transfer of permanent power to a new "ruling class" consisting of themselves, the old aristocrats, and the rich capitalists. Their economic ideal appeared to be a "social commonwealth," thanks to which in future "the workmen on the shop councils will advise the owner; but all decisions must naturally be left to the owner." Under this system, the trade unions might be "incorporated nationally" (militarized) and stripped of power; State regulation of wages would disappear and with it most of the social insurance (against illness, old age, unemployment, etc.) thanks to which the German workman, despite his moderate direct remuneration, secured a large degree of security.

Concerning social insurance, the leader Gregor Strasser, (at a public meeting in Leipzig, 1930) expressed himself with admirable clarity:

"Ten laws can do away with the entire mess (!). Traitors will be hanged. Strikers will be shot, and not many will be willing to be put against the wall on this account."

From this cheery prospect one might gather that the National-Socialists' influence was, on the whole, decidedly in favor of Big Business. As in Italy, the owners were to be allowed to purchase an absolute

guarantee of nine tenths of their present rights at the price of granting the remaining tenth to the militarized State.

From his political origins back in 1919, Adolf Hitler was a fanatical reactionary. As such, rather than as a national patriot, he secured the financial and social backing of a group of rich, conservative counter-revolutionaries at an early date in his career. Hitler himself would not have admitted this in so many words. He would hotly have answered that his aim was a partnership of interests (*Gemeinschaft*), between employed and employers. Now as the Italian proverb has it, there are partnerships and partnerships. One of the most useful partnerships ever conceived was the one between the man and the horse. Only you must take care to be the man, not the horse. There cannot be the slightest doubt but that in the social partnership as Hitler saw it, the workmen and not the owners, would be the horse.

The rich men subsidized the National-Socialists in the hope of just such a pleasant partnership. The facts speak for themselves. According to the conclusions of an investigating committee (*Untersuchungsausschuss*) of the Bavarian Diet, Hitler's financial backers in his early days included a reactionary industrialist, Von Borsig, of Berlin; two leading figures in the Association of Bavarian Industrialists (*Bayerischer Industriellen Verband*) and a highborn aristocrat, Prince Arenberg. According to the *Berlin Welt am Abend* (December 11, 1930), this first list should be completed by the addition of two more big industrialists, one baron, one count, Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck, Duke Ludwig Wilhelm of Bavaria

and the Duke of Coburg. Is it to be supposed that such illustrious representatives of the ancient order of things would relinquish the money they knew so well how to get and keep in order to install "socialism" in Germany?

In later years, the list of the alleged financial patrons of the National-Socialist movement became extremely long. Factory owners, managers, general counsel (*Syndici*) were as thick as they might be on the subscription list of the Republican National Committee in the United States. Here were no lack of interesting folk: a Frau von Prittwitz of Karlsruhe (*Die Arbeiterstimme* of Dresden, May 21, 1930); Bechstein of piano fame (*Ostthueringer Tribuene*, of Gera, Dec. 16, 1930). One of the biggest industrialists in the Ruhr District, Privy Councillor Emil Kirdorf, was frequently mentioned; the Lahusen Brothers of Bremen, who nourished the National-Socialist movement with money that was alleged to have belonged to the stockholders of the *Nordwolfe* Concern which went bankrupt under their able direction; and finally, Fritz Thyssen, that pillar of financial conservatism, who introduced Adolf Hitler to the Industrialists' Club in Duesseldorf (Jan. 1931) as the "savior of Germany." On another occasion, Herr Thyssen was reported to have peddled among his friends admission cards to a National-Socialist political meeting at fifty marks a head.

The large landowners seem to have discovered the value of Adolf Hitler somewhat later, but a fair number were signaled out as among his subsidizers. The Berlin *Vorwaerts* (Aug. 27, 1929) mentioned a group of wealthy men in East Prussia who had found it use-

ful to support the movement. Among them were a Baron Buttler and a Baron von der Goltz.

Climbing a step higher one reaches the circles of the deposed German sovereigns. Beside the Duke of Coburg, who seems to have got in at an early date, a later list (*Die Weltbuehne*, Berlin, April 30, 1932) mentioned the Duke of Brunswick, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg as financial bankers.

Is this the social limit? Certain critical publications went even further and maintained that money actually reached National-Socialist groups and undertakings from no less a personage than his "all-highest Majesty," William II. After all, "Majesty's" own son, August William, marched in processions and sat on the orators' bench with Adolf Hitler. And according to the *Vorwaerts* (Berlin, April 30, 1932), Hitler was presented to the ex-Crown Princess Cecilie, by Frau Viktoria von Dirksen, a noble lady who was at that time canvassing her friends for subscriptions in favor of the (momentarily) disbanded Storm Battalions ("S. A." and "S. S.") of the Leader.

What foreign financier or Republican industrialist outside Germany would not have been proud to see his name on the list with such social stars as these? Rumor in Germany had it that Henry Ford befriended the party, perhaps out of admiration for its vigorous opposition to the Jews and its cavalier attitude to history. An American banker informed me that the late Ivar Kreuger told him before leaving New York on his last voyage that his (Kreuger's) business interests in Germany would profit greatly by Hitler's election to the German presidency.

Sir Henry Deterding was accused by unfriendly Germans of having put up a considerable sum for the 1932 presidential campaign in the hope (or on the promise?) of being granted an oil monopoly in the Third Empire. Lord Rothermere, the English newspaper owner and stanch supporter of tyranny throughout the world, was not overlooked as a probability.

Most thrilling of all, according to the *Bohemia* of Prague (September 7, 1930) and to the French Socialist leader Paul Faure (speech before the Chamber of Deputies, February 11, 1932), among Hitler's financial bankers were certain "unnamed directors" in the Czech artillery factory, Skoda, of Pilsen. Now Skoda, said Faure, is largely owned by the French firm of Schneider-Creusot. The leading genius of this firm is Eugène Schneider. If it should develop that Hitler was financed by Skoda directors at the advice or with the knowledge of Eugène Schneider, one might reach the following conclusion: the more National-Socialism in Germany, the more France feels insecure and the higher the armaments have to be to keep that country safe. Was this an example of the Internationale of the Nationalists?

Beside such imposing personalities, it is insignificant to hear that some rich Swiss (Republicans, I suppose) contributed to the German National-Socialists, or that a Professor Von Bissing canvassed for them in Holland!

How much truth was there in all this? It is difficult to say. The National-Socialists admitted soliciting money for the party—in fact, they had regular organizations for the purpose. Hitler stated that party units

abroad also sent funds to headquarters. In few cases can these contributions be traced: Hitler's public denial that he himself received money from Mussolini was hardly significant in the absence of his oath that on no occasions did he or any of his party members receive, directly or indirectly, any material support from Italian fascists. Why need William of Hohenzollern, the German Republic's richest man, be ungenerous towards a movement that could well end in seating one of his own grandchildren upon the Imperial throne?

At a later period, each donor of at least one hundred marks received from the party a beautiful certificate stating that "in Germany's deepest need," the possessor supported the struggle "for Germany's honor and freedom" to this extent. (Richard Lewinsohn, in an interesting volume, *Das Geld in der Politik* [Money in Politics] mentioned as financial backers a number of persons not named here.)

Why should there be anything to hide in a legitimate party's being financed by friendly backers? All parties are, throughout the world, so financed. Agitation and campaigning are expensive, especially for an organization that maintained a private army of over four hundred thousand members. If it costs several million dollars to elect a mere American president, in the comparative tranquillity of the American atmosphere, what would it not cost to persuade the sovereign German people to *vote away* their self-government and hard-won economic rights? Hitler's tactics, it must never be forgotten, differed from those of Mussolini in that they were professedly legal. The latter seized the power with a comparative handful of

the Italians simply because the King and the Army failed to do their constitutional duty and suppress the March on Rome with force. Paul von Hindenburg was of another kidney. Subjectively, he always did his duty. Without the assistance or neutrality of the Army, Hitler could gain complete power in Germany only by ballots. This meant a heavy expenditure. Even Hitler's unrivaled gifts as showman could hardly have raised the requisite funds unaided. In the modern world three political systems contend for the mastery: liberal democracy, which gives the masses formal political equality yet excludes them from the major benefits of wealth; Communism, which distributes the national income fairly equally, but grants the masses no political power; and fascism, which excludes the vast majority from both power and wealth. That men should submit to the last when imposed by a violent minority, is comprehensible. But that they should be brought to vote for their permanent political and economic inferiority would be an achievement unrivaled in history. The man who could accomplish this, would have done something that no amount of money could adequately requite.

Yet in the magnitude of this task lay a certain danger of which the German capitalist gradually became aware. The German situation in the spring of 1932 was not really parallel to that in Italy at the time of the fascist insurrection. In the first place, Italian business was, for the most part, organized in small, independent units, not unlike those the German National-Socialists claimed they wanted to restore. Therefore the fascist revolution was never really anti-capitalist. In the second place, Mussolini

carried out his March on Rome with a small number of people, and the party dictatorship he then proceeded to install comprised but a fairly small part of the population. In the third place, the Italian masses were politically neutral and the German masses certainly were not. In the fourth place, something between thirty and forty percent of all adult Germans were employed in industry and the task of riding rough-shod over them could not be a comfortable one.

Therefore the National-Socialist party presented a problem to the German rich. They knew exactly what they were giving their money for: suppression of labor rights and reduction of wages; substitution of a conservative form of government for "dangerous democracy"; perhaps eventually a monarchical restoration. Yet to get complete control of the German State this single party would have had to poll eighteen or nineteen million votes. Most of its supporters were members of the impoverished middle class and hostile to economic privilege and large fortunes. So long as the National-Socialists were out of power and Hitler could continue to exploit the world depression and nourish each of the several sorts of discontent he collected around him with the appropriate gas, revolt against the leaders was unlikely, but once in power, the party members would begin to claim some of the benefits of the "revolutionary" program for which they had voted. At first the party hatred was cleverly directed against workmen and foreigners, but as soon as the "Marxist danger" had been eliminated within Germany, the rank and file would turn on the business men with demands for that semi-socialist legislation which they had been promised.

Here lay the danger to German pseudo-capitalism. There could be no question as to the respectable conservative character of the National-Socialist leaders, despite their wild words. Instructive in this respect was the letter written (February 18, 1930) by the Dresden Leader of the party organization to factory manager Fritsche in Weimar:

"Do not let yourself be continually confused by the text of our posters. . . . Of course, there are catch-words like 'Down with capitalism,' 'Jews . . . ' etc., but these are necessary (unquestionably) for under the flag of 'German national' or 'national' alone, you must know, we should never reach our goal, we should have no future. We must talk the language of the embittered Socialist workmen . . . or else they wouldn't feel at home with us. We don't come out with a direct program . . . for reasons of diplomacy."

The capitalists would have been quite willing to allow Hitler and his friends to rule Germany if only they had been sure that they could prevent the rank and file from demanding the promised socialization of key industries and banks, the suppression of department stores, and the installation of economic self-sufficiency.

A considerable part of the National-Socialists expected just this sort of thing. They at least were hostile to contemporary capitalism. For the best expression of what they really wished one must go, not to the official party leaders, but to a monthly magazine, called *Die Tat*, for here anti-capitalism was open and articulate. This publication was nationalistic and radically revolutionary at the same time. It dripped hostility to the plutocracy. The two young men who

directed it, Hans Zehrer and Ferdinand Fried, stood outside the National-Socialist party and were disliked and a little feared as rivals by the party leaders. But they alone gave to the romantically radical tenets of the movement an intellectual cohesion and a form suitable for intelligent discussion.

Hans Zehrer, the leader of the *Tat Circle*, was originally a newspaper man with energy, ambition, intelligence and a strong constructive gift. As the foreign political writer of a larger Berlin daily, he managed to increase its circulation on the days when his vast international schemes appeared. In October, 1929, *Die Tat*, an insignificant review in its twenty-first year, came into his hands. In less than three years he and his young friends made it the leading political magazine in the country, thanks to their excellent presentation, uncanny prophecies, and skill in giving intelligible expression to the "dark instincts" of the German middle class.

Ferdinand Fried, whose real name is Zimmermann, popularized financial and economic topics, and literally took the breath out of German bankers and businessmen by his keen forecasts of the increasing economic depression.

Fundamentally, the pair were patriotic. They wished to "free Germany" and to do so were prepared to destroy Occidental society in that country and to turn their backs on western culture altogether.

Fundamentally, they hated that lucid Mediterranean civilization without which they might still be living in the forests of their Germanic-Slavic ancestors. Nationalism became with them a particularist substitute for religion. Their entire attitude strength-

ened the suspicion that Germany—Prussia, at least—was hardly part of the western world at all.

Germany, they claimed, must become “autarchic” by reducing its imports to an absolute minimum. The west represented the Devil of Rationality that ruined the German people. Its political democracy and liberal economics were the creations of Reason. Reason was bankrupt. Therefore back to the “dark instincts” of blood and nation, the *esprit de corps* of an army. Let Germany default and defy its western creditors, close its frontiers, organize the smaller agrarian states of the European east and south east and create from out of the chaos secretly adored by any number of Germans, a new Empire.

Reduce international trade to the minimum, destroy international finance root and branch! This farewell to business specialization requires favoring the German farmers—not the big estate-owners, but the peasants, whose traditional ideas (superstitions?) were considered the most valuable part of a nation’s inheritance. Never again should the condition of Brazilian coffee growers be permitted to affect the living standard of the Germans!

To prevent this, the *Tat* writers urged *the Germans themselves to lower it voluntarily and at once!* For this was the price of national liberation and renewal. All Germans must share the comparative poverty necessary to political and economic independence. Therefore, except for the peasant holdings, away with private property: let Germany adopt some form of State socialism which would equalize income, and which logically was the normal outcome of the monopolistic and State-supported structure of German

capitalism. One proposal (*Die Tat*, July, 1932) was to limit all German incomes to that of the Chancellor (about five thousand dollars annually). Zehrer and Fried believed that eventually an amalgamation of the middle-class National-Socialist masses and the proletarian Socialist and Communist workers was bound to occur. Then the united German people could thumb their noses at the western world and proceed to install "German socialism" and the "Third Empire."

Until May, 1932, everything was moving in the direction desired by *Die Tat*. And then history took a hand in the person of President Paul von Hindenburg and his most trusted advisers.

Certain of the rich and powerful were beginning to see that the prolonged alliance of pseudo-capitalism with any sort of revolutionary movement was bound to lead to the elimination of the "kept capitalists"—and to sheer off from Hitlerism.

Scenting the danger, the *Tat* writers began to threaten with revolution. Entirely unimpressed, the Conservatives set about protecting the economic system on which they flourished.

It began to look as if in their desire to save their property, they might turn out to be the saviors of the German Republic as well.

CHAPTER XIII

INCUBATORS OF REACTION

"Within the school and everything connected with it, the pupils have to refrain from any provocative insistence on party politics. All party political activity in the school and everything connected with it, is forbidden."

Rules for Intermediate and Higher
Public Schools in Prussia.

ARTHUR was thirteen years old, an American living in Berlin, and attending a school kept by Catholic priests. Some time in the winter of 1931 he came to his father.

"Dad," he said, in the serious, one-man-to-another tone he kept for important affairs, "what do you think of National-Socialism?"

Scenting danger, his father evaded the issue. "I don't think about it. National-Socialism is a purely German matter which does not concern you or me."

Unsatisfied, but baffled, Arthur retired. A few days later he returned. "Dad, if you were a German, would you be a National-Socialist?"

"Why do you ask that, my boy?"

"You see, nearly all my friends are National-Socialists. I like to be with them and if you aren't one, there are so many interesting things you get shut out of."

"But the Catholic bishops have condemned National-Socialism. How can Catholic boys be members of a forbidden organization?"

"I don't know, Dad. But they are, and if you aren't a National-Socialist in this school, you aren't anybody. Do you think as a foreigner I could become one?"

Arthur did not become a National-Socialist. But in 1932 about half of the boys in his class openly supported a party unequivocally condemned by churchmen. The chief form of scuffling rough-house in his class was "chariot bumping," apparently inspired by the moving-picture, "Ben Hur." The aim is to crash into and knock over the opposing chariots. In previous years the human chariots were divided into "Romans" and "Jews." Then they became "Centrists" and "Nazis"—and for the first time, hurting the opponents became the general aim.

The Jesuit fathers tried to put a stop to political bickering, but without success. After all, it was they who inaugurated the system of hammering fixed opinions into the impressionable wax of childhood. What could they expect in a country in which children of six years were mobilized in rival camps and carried into their play the adult hatred they absorbed from the social atmosphere?

A girl of fourteen wrote from Bavaria: "The boys . . . in the lower classes are enthusiastic followers of Hitler and will have nothing to do with the few members of the (Republican) *Reichsbanner*." From Schweidnitz in Silesia came the following cheery report: "In the grade schools (*Volksschulen*) the Hitlerites are the strongest and bully the others in big

fighths in the streets and at school." In a girl's secondary school (*Lyzeum*) in the same town, one teacher permitted an "hour's political discussion" and a straw ballot on national party lines by the girls. This was expressly forbidden by the Prussian Ministry of Education, but Berlin was far away and weak-kneed in such matters. Political pins and badges were forbidden, but they too were worn with impunity. "The girls paint swastikas on benches and on their finger nails and shout 'Hail Hitler!' in class."

In the Karl Marx School in Berlin anything but radical socialism among the pupils was for several years punished by the other pupils with violence and boycott. In Brunswick Town, the "socialist boys" and the "middle-class boys" lived in a state of lasting feud. And so from city to city, town to town, village to village and farm to farm throughout the entire fevered country.

How could such sharp tension be created among children too young to know any of the facts? Clearly in the first instance, as a reflection of the political passion prevailing among the adults, but instead of endeavoring to keep children out of adult quarrels, certain political parties, notably the Communists and the National-Socialists, took leaves out of Lenin's and Mussolini's books respectively. The "Communist Youth" was founded as an illegal group during the war (1916) and established openly in November, 1919. The National-Socialist campaign for the children apparently first became deliberately operative in 1924 in Plauen, but two years later "Hitler Youth" organizations began to spread through the country. By 1932 a large part of the German middle-class chil-

dren either belonged to or sympathized with some such group.

In the town of Schweidnitz two weekly newspapers were regularly given away to young pupils by political agitators. One of them was Communist and preached hatred of the rich and contempt of Christianity. The other was National-Socialist. It informed the children that their parents had "sold them to work for France," and that the responsibility for this slavery lay with the Social-Democrats and those who voted for them.

Catholic children had no political organization, but they were warned by parents and teachers not to play with Communist or National-Socialist babies. In a boys' class in Reichenbach in Silesia, the only two Catholics were habitually labeled "Center Party pigs" or "Brüning pigs" (after the name of the former Catholic Chancellor). Inevitably, such manifestations of childish brutality, being encouraged, became increasingly barbarous.

Was it surprising that older boys of eighteen and nineteen went about equipped with revolvers, knives and brass knuckles, that assault became common and manslaughter fairly frequent and that even among the half-grown the murder of political opponents was considered laudable?

Three-fourths of the political fanaticism of the German schools was the direct result of the effort to revive nationalism and social privilege. The schools were the incubators and cradles of reaction. The fault lay with the early Republican authorities.

What did these people do when, in the first flush of a successful revolution, they had it in their power to

mold the State and with it the educational system practically according to their own will? Next to nothing. Under the Empire the school system had been deliberately and skillfully planned to inculcate that sense of servility to social superiors without which the ruling class could not have maintained itself a year. The Republicans must have been aware of this fact, since they themselves passed through these schools. Nonetheless they allowed the old system, in a very slightly modified form, to continue.

For several years the Imperial school books, with their involuntarily humorous accounts of Prussian sovereigns' noble characters and unequalled mental qualities, continued to be placed in the hands of little Republicans. Histories, reading-books, song-books and atlases remained the same as before. The excuse given was that none other were available, but it would have been wiser to have abolished books altogether and with it all schooling if necessary for a couple of years, rather than to allow the old one-sided accounts of the German past to be imprinted on the minds of young citizens of the "freest Republic in the world."

Later these textbooks were replaced by others written on a fairly liberal and generally Republican basis. In fact, thanks to the persistent energy of a small group of German educators, the history texts were almost completely reformed to correspond with the five points of the international history teachers' Program of Bern. These points were in brief 1) the elimination of all demonstrable untruths; 2) the avoidance of a double moral standard, one for one's own country, another for foreigners; 3) avoidance of all generalizations about the comparative value of

peoples and races; 4) reserve in the treatment of the World War, especially in the question of responsibility; 5) an affirmative attitude toward the League of Nations. The many German history books that I personally examined, were certainly as objective as those used in the Western countries, probably more so. Nor were they provocatively anti-Republican.

Somewhat different was the tone in the school readers. Obviously a self-respecting Republic would not have continued to nourish young minds on legends flattering to former royalty, so long, at least, as there was any chance of monarchical restoration.

Decidedly less objective were the geography books. It is clear that clever manipulation of maps can falsify a historical situation. In 1930 appeared a new edition of *Putzger's School Atlas*. One map showed the German colonization to the east, and another the distribution of people in Central Europe in the year 1477. By these maps the (historically unquestionable) fact was demonstrated that, at this period, what is now called the Polish Corridor was overwhelmingly Polish in population. What happened? A Polish propagandist got hold of this atlas and used it as an argument for the historical right of Poland to the contested territory. The following year appeared a brand new edition of the same book, in which most of the said Corridor had become German and the remainder was colored, not with the green of the Poles, but with the yellow of "other Slavic peoples," notably the Kasubians. Evidently therefore between the 1930 and 1931 editions of the atlas, either science had reached a new estimate of the number of Germans in the Corridor Territory in early times and made sure that the

Kassubians were not a sort of Poles, or the atlas makers had deliberately modified the facts.

Another curious source of militarist, reactionary propaganda consisted in the choice of song books. However, the influence of even the most war-like ditties on little children should not be exaggerated and these songs could unquestionably be matched in other less militaristic countries.

Examination of the contemporary textbooks points unfailingly to the conclusion that the reaction in the schools was promoted not so much by any books as by the personal influence of the teachers. The teachers were for the most part consistent enemies of the democratic Republic. Why?

Because many of them had grown up happily under the old régime and saw no reason to transfer their inner allegiance to a Republic dominated by workmen, which had been born of defeat and developed in what they felt to be continual humiliation.

Because the Republican authorities never sufficiently built up the material security and social eminence of the teaching staff.

Because the Republic first opened the teaching career to young men and women and then under pressure of economy, eliminated them without regard to political color, in favor of teachers too old to acquire a taste for democracy.

Finally, because the teachers nearly all came from the expropriated middle class that the Republic steadily connived at exploiting and expropriating.

The educational authorities occasionally reacted to the changing situation but to little effect. In the first place, the new régime was chiefly supported by So-

cial-Democrats, Democrats and Catholics. In loyalty to the Republic they were united. On educational questions their views were utterly divergent. The Social-Democrats opposed religious teaching in any form, were resentful of tradition and wished the children to be raised in preparation for socialism. The Democrats laid emphasis upon independent thought and training in citizenship. The Catholics insisted on religious and moral discipline along traditional lines. As a result the new schools had no common principle of guidance: abstract republicanism alone was much too thin to attract the imagination of emotional adolescents. At times the authority in educational matters fell into strange keeping. In January, 1921, Otto Boelitz, who later became Prussian Minister of Education, with authority over three fifths of the schools in all Germany, boldly declared that "the coming state must be founded on the firm Imperial idea . . . The old spirit of Prussia, the spirit of Potsdam, must and will come back." This was prophetic: by 1932 Germany had been "Potsdamned" again.

At first the teachers carried on their work against the new order with extreme caution. In this period their reactionary hankering found its least dangerous ally in the *V.D.A. (Verein für das Deutschtum im Auslande—Association for Keeping up Germanism Abroad)*. This association was primarily supported by school children, some two million of whom were members, and it was officially permitted in all schools; in many cases teachers openly recruited for it with all the means of subtle pressure in their power.

In the large towns one hardly noticed its activities; in a tiny railway station in the Black Forest I once

came upon the following placard: "Germans, do you know that forty million Germans live abroad? . . . No, Germanism in foreign countries must not be lost!"

To prevent such a calamity was the avowed purpose of the *V.D.A.* Its immediate aim was the preservation of German schools, language and culture abroad, and to this end it used its very considerable funds. Now it was inevitable that after a political decision that violently severed a fairly large number of unwilling Germans from Germany, and violently prevented the desired political marriage with Austria, a determined effort should be made to keep vivid the consciousness of these "wrongs" in preparation for the day when they could be righted. But the *V.D.A.* did not stop here. Its exaggerated insistence on the "inhuman" oppression to which the Germans in other countries, such as Czechoslovakia and Italy, were subject, could only result in a hatred for these countries among the German children. The figure of forty million Germans living abroad was a rank fiction unless in this number were included not only the Swiss, who are quite happy as they are, but all those Germans who deliberately migrated to the United States and other parts of the world with the intention of remaining.

In Danzig the young members of the *V.D.A.* paraded the streets singing songs exalting war with Poland; among the young circulated an official pamphlet, *A Thousand Years of Hereditary Enmity with France*. Everything German, including the Gothic script illegible to the rest of the world, was exalted over everything foreign. The school children were en-

couraged to demand colonies and to feel themselves the object of a "robbery"; until this "wrong" had been righted, as the official *Explanation* of the *V.D.A.* indirectly admitted (question No. 18), it was impossible for Germans to accept international reconciliation! Yet Article 148 of the German Constitution specifically stated that "in all schools" instruction must be given "in the spirit of international reconciliation."

All in all, the impartial investigator must reach the conclusion that under cover of preserving cultural relations with Germans abroad, the *V.D.A.* was working for the old Pan-German ideal openly expressed to its young members by Ritter von Skrib in 1926: "One people! then one State! and only then, when the immediate national task has been accomplished, the super-national task of a new central European unification under German leadership." In the minds of the reactionary school teachers, there can be little doubt, such aggressive patriotism was intimately connected with hatred of the democratic Republic and of the organized workmen who were its chief defenders. Interesting and entirely credible was the account given in a contemporary novel, *Volk im Fieber*, of the hopeless struggle and final suicide of a school principal in an east German town, who tried to resist his surroundings and remain faithful to the spirit of the Republic.

This principal was an exception. On the whole, in the majority of the intermediate schools (roughly corresponding to English Public Schools) and in the *Volksschulen* (grade schools) in the country and the smaller towns, the students and the faculty were over-

whelmingly Nationalist and socially reactionary. Only in the urban *Volksschulen*, teachers and pupils generally remained faithful to the spirit of the democratic Republic.

At the *Realgymnasium* in Reichenbach, in 1931, the entire *Obersecunda* class (boys of about sixteen) insolently abandoned the (obligatory) Constitution Day ceremony and marched to the nearest National-Socialist headquarters, where they ostentatiously shouted "Hail, Hitler!" Punishment by the principal, who shared the boys' views, was nominal.

In a Catholic school for boys in the Mark Brandenburg, the gymnastic teacher used to encourage slack classes with the question:

"How on earth do you boys think you are going to beat the Poles in the coming war, if you don't develop your muscles?"

The geography teacher in the same institution, a priest, lost no opportunity to inform his pupils that they were expected to recover the Corridor from Poland, by force, if necessary. The investigation among eleven to fourteen-year-old pupils in the common schools (*Volksschulen*) all over Germany, carried out in 1932 by the Brunswick teacher, H. Groenewald, showed the fruit of such teaching. In answer to his questions, 69 percent of the children answered that they hated the French and 92 percent hated the Poles. A large proportion of them accepted with equanimity the idea of a new war!

The situation had gone so far by 1931 that no change in school policy could immediately affect it. For, under the influence of the reactionary parties, children of ten and twelve already possessed a "politi-

cal standpoint" that they did not allow their teachers to criticize. According to one estimate (1932), eighty percent of all intermediate school graduates in Berlin (a Republican center!) were National-Socialists.

This party was the most bitter opponent of democracy, labor and international understanding. Its influence on striplings could be gathered by a perusal of some of its publications for youth, *Der Junge Sturmtrupp*, *Der Junge Nationalsozialist*, *Jungvolk* and *Der Aufmarsch*. Here children were called upon to "square accounts with the November criminals"—meaning the Republicans—and to demand foreign territory for expansion toward the east. They learned of Germany's "bleeding western borders" and of Czechoslovakian "terrorism" and "wholesale arrest of harmless Germans." They were told that the "System"—meaning the democratic Republic—was inimical to youth. And they were aroused in all possible ways to a fanatical admiration of old-time Prussianism. Here were articles about Potsdam and endless laudations of by-gone Prussian kings. "Prussia must again become Prussian"; "National-Socialism is racial Prussianism." So long as the Versailles Treaty existed, Germany was without "honor." The League of Nations was dismissed as a "swindle."

To such fanatics, even the tepid Republicanism of the last years seemed rank treason. In June, 1932, the Diet of the small State of Mecklenburg-Strelitz passed a law requiring German history henceforth to be taught on decidedly nationalistic lines, with the aim of educating the young to militarism (*Wehrhaftigkeit*).

The head of a large boys' school in Berlin-Friede-

nau defended himself against the charge of having furthered anti-Republican propaganda but admitted as a matter of course that he had tried to encourage "reverence for the national past." This "reverence," as taught before the war, definitely eulogized everything German, monarchical, Prussian and autocratic, while hiding from the pupils the blemishes inherent in the character and conduct of the beloved sovereigns.

The outcome of such teaching in such an atmosphere was a new sort of citizen. As the (apparently) Communist writer, Rudolf Kappe enthusiastically put it (*Die neue Erziehung*, March, 1931), the young people in Germany had lost all sense of individual liberty and wanted a new authority and a collective idol—communism or fascism—to serve.

"Once again they believe in violence as one of the productive motors of historical life," he wrote. Their conduct certainly showed it.

The German reaction, inevitable as it seemed, could never have assumed such frenzied proportions without the influence of the schools.

CHAPTER XIV

STUDENTS OF THE THIRD EMPIRE

"Did you want to kill him, Buck?"

'Well, I bet I did.'

'What did he do to you?'

'Him? He never done nothing to me.'

'Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?'

'Why, nothing—only it's on account of the feud!'

—(*Huckleberry Finn*, by MARK TWAIN.)

ON TWO successive June days in 1932, passers before the main building of the Goethe University in the ancient Free City of Frankfort-on-the-Main, must have noted that its doors were shut. This step had not been taken in order to save the students from over-working in the summer heat. No, it was merely considered indispensable for preventing the entrance of persons wearing National-Socialist uniforms, after the *Rector Magnificus* had forbade all symbols of political strife to be worn on the premises. For the Rector's decision did not please the perfervid patriotic hearts of the young men. Proud of their new uniforms, they stood about the entrance and sang the battle hymn of the Third Empire they hoped to create, the *Horst Wessel* Song. Their claim to dominion was, however, disputed. A smaller group of Communist students gradually collected and were reinforced by some passing workmen of similar turn of mind. These

last took up the musical challenge by singing the revolutionary "*Internationale*." The trick proved contagious. The students of the dueling corps, the so-called "color students," lifted their scarred and bandaged faces in a fighting song of older days, "Fellows, turn out" (*Burschen heraus*). Once the musical part of the program was ended, like so many tom-cats on a common roof, they sprang at each other and the fur flew. To prevent a second performance the University doors were closed for a few days.

No one seemed particularly excited since political brawling had become the principal pastime of German youth, particularly in the universities. In just a few years, the University and the Technical Institute and the Business College in Berlin, the Universities in Heidelberg, Halle, Munich, Cologne, Marburg, Greifswald, Kiel, Königsberg and Hamburg, the Technical Institutions in Hanover and in Brunswick, the Engineering School at Wismar, and perhaps other centers of culture, all witnessed the "national awakening" of the German students. One by one, the universities passed through the instructive experience of having to submit to the hysterical and not altogether spontaneous fanaticism of a group of students, or close their doors. Truly, it was a long step from this to the stiff yet studious atmosphere of by-gone days.

The classical German universities—according to Professor Ernst Robert Curtius (*Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, Stuttgart, 1932)—had four aims: to preserve and pass on the highest fruits of Occidental education and knowledge; to prepare specialists for practical professions; to promote systematic scientific research;

to train the human personality to culture in its highest sense. In these universities, to be sure, there was also a characteristic social life, and certain of the more aristocratic student clubs, *Borussia* of Bonn, *Saxo-Borussia* of Heidelberg, *Tübinger Schwaben*, etc., had almost a monopoly of branches of the Government administration. But, in the field of pure knowledge and research, the universities were open to the talented, however humble their origin. The prerequisites for the magnificent achievements of German learning and research were a fanatical attachment to truth for its own sake, and complete freedom of instruction. No one dreamed of telling a professor what or how he had to teach—not even the Kaiser! At the worst political radicals need fear only social boycott and retarded promotion.

The period following the war brought a change. The Socialists, with their insistence on opening the universities to everyone, tended to reduce them to mere professional schools. By 1932, over one hundred and thirty thousand students, of which twenty-two thousand were women, were registered throughout Germany. Insignificant though this number may seem to an American, it was about twice as large as before the war, when the country's population was slightly greater.

A few among the post-war students represented the former privileged classes, nobles, officers, officials, professors, landowners, big capitalists, and were reactionary through hatred of democracy itself; a second type lived close to the hunger line and foresaw a jobless future unless the "System" be changed by "revolution"; and a third sort were spiritually so de-

pressed by intellectual and moral uncertainty that they hungrily swallowed the new dogmas of patriotism and obedience.

Between them, they really endangered the existence of the old-fashioned university. "Formerly," as the rector of one university told me with bitterness, "the students studied in order to obtain a philosophy of life. Now they arrive with positive convictions about everything, usually entirely unfounded, and refuse to listen to anything but a confirmation of their adolescent pipe-dreams. The gulf between professors and students in Germany has never been so wide." The professors themselves were reactionary enough, largely out of pique at the loss of privileged social position; but compared with the mass of the students (and not only the scar-faced lads in the dueling corps) they scintillated liberalism. The student body as a whole, or perhaps two-thirds of it, had come to desire not so much a university education as a training combining the dogmatic certainty of a theological institute with the happy intolerance of a military academy. If they had had their way, the tradition of educators like the Humboldts would have been abruptly snapped off. Freedom of instruction would have been abolished. Atmosphere and training would have become narrowly nationalistic. This would have meant the elimination of German culture, the repudiation of internationalists like Goethe and Kant and critics of Germanism like Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Hoelderlin. The new students also turned their backs on everything foreign. Yet according to Professor Curtius, "From its own substance alone the German mind (*Geist*) cannot live. Whoever cuts it off

from the West and the South drives it toward the East, and that means to its ruin." Under the word "foreign" the jingos included Jews, many of whose ancestors had lived in Germany since Roman times. The least convincing vulgarizations of "racial science" (provided they proved the superiority of Teutons) were read like novels by eager young students and the National-Socialists managed, against the will of the faculty, to install at the University of Jena a chair for "Social Anthropology," meaning the attempt to give scientific support to the claim of Nordic superiority.

The Germans had been late in achieving formal political unity and were still far from forming a cohesive nation. They could not take their patriotism lightly, as one of a number of inevitable loyalties, to be heightened or dampened as the occasion requires. To them it remained something that must be deliberately stressed and therefore found its most typical outlets in the insistence on Gothic (German) type in books and Gothic script in the schools; in the substitution of the genuinely "national" *K* and *Z* for the foreign letter *C*, and in the use of the adjective "German" to the point of mania in all public nomenclature.

The students further wished the suppression of any thing or person in any way connected with socialism or democracy, the elimination of freedom of discussion, and the exclusive teaching of a body of "State-approved" doctrine doubtless to be hatched out by the more "intellectual" of the Nationalist politicians. As a result, according to Professor Curtius, "Germany became the first country in which nationalism has created a solid front against mind—the

mind of its own people as well—and against culture—(including that which developed in its own territory). And these opponents of mind are not a horde of rabble . . . but intellectuals.” Naturally, with such a point of view, went unlimited conceit and a belief in the superior capacity of youth—the winning impertinence of adolescence. During the Lausanne conference of 1932 the President of the *Deutscher Studentenschaft* (a largely National-Socialist student body) addressed an open letter to the absent Chancellor, Franz von Papen, to warn him that the “German Youth” were not satisfied with his conduct.

This pretty incident was one in a long series. Encouraged by the more nationally fanatic among their professors and by the evangelical meekness of the Republican authorities, the German students began to distinguish themselves by their manly resistance to those of their professors who fell under their displeasure. In one case, the young men at the Engineering Academy of Wismar demanded the dismissal of an instructor because they suspected that the name of Weingarten could only be carried by a Jew. But this was a minor matter. Historical were four other instances, the “cases” of Gumbel, Lessing, Nawiasky and Dehn.

E. J. Gumbel took part in the war, was wounded, turned pacifist and joined the Social-Democratic party. In 1923 he became instructor of an obscure branch of mathematical statistics at the University of Heidelberg. His scientific work was admittedly brilliant.

As a writer he took a minor political part against the private armies and anti-Republican plots of the

inflation days. In July, 1924, at a great pacifist demonstration in Heidelberg, he as speaker asked his audience to keep silent for two minutes in honor of those dead "who fell—I will not say upon the field of dishonor." The assembly applauded. The next day the Student Parliament, a body dominated by the National-Socialists, voted to have Gumbel dismissed from the university for the implication that death on the field of battle could be anything but glorious. The Philosophical Faculty, to which Gumbel belonged, took the part of the students. The Education Ministry of Baden forbade Gumbel to lecture further. When, however, he apologized for using the expression "field of dishonor," he was reinstated. But the Faculty members were not satisfied, and published a committee opinion extremely unfavorable to Gumbel.

Five years later, in 1930, when Gumbel, in entirely routine fashion became "extraordinary professor," the Nationalistic students staged such a series of riots and protests that their organization had to be dissolved. In December, members of the Baden Diet resorted to fists on the public floor in the heat of their dispute over the "Gumbel case." A month later, the Nationalists attempted a popular referendum to force the State Government to dismiss the Professor of Statistics, but in vain. Gumbel remained—and remained a pacifist. A year later he again burst into the public eye by a speech to Socialist students, wherein he declared that for him the war could better be symbolized by a turnip (*Kohlruebe*) which was about all the Germans got to eat in the worst period of hostilities—than by a "lightly-clothed virgin with a palm of victory in her hand." This was too much for Hei-

delberg. At the request of the Philosophy Faculty, the Ministry of Education in Baden canceled his "license to teach."

No less lordly was the behavior of the students of the Technical Institute in Hanover toward one of their professors. Theodor Lessing was professor of philosophy. A strange figure, in appearance, partly rabbi, partly Bolshevik and partly poet, with the last prevailing. His books betray a pessimism, a deep distrust of everything so far accomplished by the human species, a disappointed craving for a better world that is the origin of much biting sarcasm. One of his works, *Untergang der Erde am Geist*, anticipated and rivaled the brilliant conjectures of Oswald Spengler. Professor Lessing was also a Socialist; in the presidential campaign of 1925, he published, in the *Prager Presse*, a study of Paul von Hindenburg. Here in the brilliance of an unsurpassed style he analyzed the utter simplicity of the old field marshal, a man who never developed, who began as he remained—"German, Prussian, Christian, monarchist, soldier, comrade"—who "strides with the perfect beauty of the ignorant, as lightly as a child through seas of blood, streams of bile and mountains of obstacles"; who believed that when he died he would go straight to a heaven from which he might "look down and bless some future German army as it triumphantly enters the conquered city of Paris."

Hindenburg was elected President. A local Hanover newspaper saw the study in the *Prager Presse* and reproduced bits of it. A professor at the Technical Institute saw the bits, and encouraged the students to protest. They needed small encouragement. Under

the leadership of two of their number, one of whom was a relative of the Nationalist newspaper magnate, Alfred Hugenberg, they began a series of demonstrations against Lessing that lasted literally for years. In the first phase his lectures were broken into, mobs stood outside the building and jeered at him, others surrounded him and his family, jostled him and consented to desist only when he finally decided to cease lecturing for a semester. Other students combed Lessing's literary output for any other material that could be used against him, and by gross misrepresentation, were able to shape a totally unnatural picture.

None of the students really ever sought to know the facts. The Ministry of Education at Berlin reproved Lessing but saw no reason for suspending him. The Faculty and Rector of the Technical Institute for the most part sided with the students. All through Germany the Nationalists howled for the removal of this "dirty spot" on the fair shield of German education. The National-Socialists put Lessing's name high up on a list of those whose "heads would roll" in the Third Empire they intended to create. He received bushels of threatening letters. His reputation remained under a cloud, and during the presidential election of 1932 he actually felt compelled to withdraw to Denmark, so sure he was that Hitler's election would mean physical attacks upon him, possibly of a mortal character.

All for saying in an "enemy paper" (in Czechoslovakia) something about Hindenburg which nine out of ten educated Germans believe as a matter of course.

Guenther Dehn was a Lutheran pastor. He came

from the severe theological school of Barth Thurneisen and his credo was a stern one, according to which divinity and the world are forever separated and the belief in a coming kingdom of God on earth is not "Christian but naïvely optimistic." In 1928, he addressed an audience in the Church of St. Ulrich in Magdeburg. In this speech he tried to explain the Christian attitude to war: as a political phenomenon the participation of the individual in war is justified; from the divine standpoint it is contrary to the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Therefore the believing Christian is asked to choose between his civic patriotic duty and his duty to God. In last analysis, the Christian's decision to fight or not, remains a matter of his individual conscience. In conformity with this general idea Dehn expressed a doubt whether monuments to the war dead ought properly to be erected in churches.

This address, grossly deformed, was taken up by newspapers, and circulated by irate Nationalists who were present. When sometime later an attempt was made to appoint Dehn to the Theological Faculty at Heidelberg, the University, frightened by Heidelberg's experience with Gumbel, demurred. The Prussian Minister of Education appointed Dehn to the University of Halle, the successor of that University of Wittenberg where Luther taught and Hamlet studied. Whereupon the Nationalistic students raised the same sort of protest as elsewhere, since they correctly saw in Dehn's ideas a fertile field for conscientious objectors in the next war. The usual tumults, slander, official protests, investigations and final exoneration ensued. But the relations between

Professor Dehn and the majority of the nationalistic faculty and students at Halle remained of the coldest.

Not essentially different was the case of Professor Hans Nawiasky of Munich. This teacher of constitutional law was an authority. His lectures were well attended. Yet, in the summer of 1931, he was suddenly accused by an anonymous student in a National-Socialist newspaper of having said that at Versailles the Allies had only done to Germany what Germany had done to its beaten enemies at Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk. The usual national protests, the usual talk about the dignity and honor of Germany and of the students, the usual violent attempt to prevent the professor from continuing his lectures took place. In course of the exoneration it developed that Nawiasky had really compared the Treaty of Versailles to those imposed by Germany, but only to condemn all three of them!

Consideration of these cases shows clearly the similarity between them. In three cases the intended victims were Jews. In three cases they were—or had been—Socialists; all four professors represented a tendency contrary to the militarism and the “my country, right or wrong” attitude of the students. These students wanted to wipe out Article 142 of the German Constitution, which guaranteed the unhampered dissemination of “science and its teachings.” They cared for no freedom—not even their own. Their excessive patriotism was an emotional valve for the emotion connected with their physical and spiritual dissatisfaction.

In trying to explain the students’ behavior, cultured Nationalists said that patriotic young Germans could

not bear to feel themselves "a people with inferior rights." It is impossible to escape the conclusion that those who hammered a sense of national humiliation into youthful minds did so in the hope of reconciling them to accepting "inferior rights" *within their own country*. The manner in which the students' political demonstrations were staged, pointed to instigation by political groups who saw an opportunity of exploiting the generous feelings of youth for realizing the "Third Empire." A fore-taste of that Empire lay in the printed report that in the anatomical laboratories of Berlin University, women students sometimes carved their beloved swastika into the flesh of the cadavers on which they were learning anatomy.

It was not primarily the fault of the young people. They grew up in an unhappy period of war and spiritual chaos only to come plump into an economic depression of unequaled dimensions. Behind their group rhetoric and violence was a fundamental incapacity to stand unaided before the fearful uncertainty of life.

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CHAPTER XV

LIMPING DEMOCRACY

"The German people are now in the saddle and will have to ride . . . No one becomes a master of violin playing just because he is given a master-violin."

Chancellor Max von Baden before the last Imperial *Reichstag*, October, 1918.

POPULAR government was not native to Germany. It was an artificial graft from the West. Given time, the grafted democracy would doubtless have merged with the old trunk and begun to sprout. But the time was limited, the climate unfavorable. Prussia, east of the River Elbe, was about as suitable a field for western ideas as for pineapples. Autocracy was embedded in its very soil. Even West Germany, though highly civilized, was backward in political development. At the time Americans were insisting that God created men "free and equal" and Thomas Paine was composing the "Rights of Man," petty German princes were still supporting their extravagant little courts by renting their subjects as soldiers to foreign governments. It was only later, when Paine's ideas had been spread throughout Europe by the victorious French revolutionaries, that the idea of self-government began to ferment in the better German heads and even rose to the top a single time in the abortive Republican movement of 1848. The fact

remains, until 1918, though there had been Democrats in Germany, the German people had never demanded democracy.

The Imperial *Reichstag* was, to be sure, elected by the German people. It had the entire control of finances in its hands, the power of taxing. This single prerogative enabled successive English parliaments gradually to take all power from the Crown, by the simple expedient of withholding the life-giving funds. It does not seem to have occurred to the Imperial *Reichstag* to do the same. Elected by universal suffrage as it was, it constantly revealed a majority content with the more or less benevolent paternalism of the Kaiser and the oligarchs.

Without the intervention of General Erich Ludendorff in 1918, it is unlikely that war weariness and defeat alone would have been sufficient to call into existence the "most democratic Republic in the world," but since Ludendorff told Berlin that the Army needed a "liberal government" if it was to avoid humiliation, naturally the leaders set about getting one. They had specialists for everything: it was not difficult to produce a much admired Republican Constitution, whose many defects hardly appeared on the surface. The real preoccupation of the social-democratic first President and his friends the generals, seems to have been less the making of Germany safe for theoretical democracy than of making it unsafe for practical Bolsheviks.

In the face of the terrible difficulties inherent in an unexpected and crushing defeat, and a Treaty which seemed to aim at nothing less than the destruction of that power and wealth fifty years of prestige had

taught the Germans to identify with national existence—it was hard for any régime to be popular. Unquestionably, the determination of the Allies, chiefly the French and Belgians, to hold to the substance of a one-sided peace, was one of the most terrible handicaps the Democrats had to endure. Since democracy was new and experimental, it needed popularity. To be popular, successes were necessary. The Allies consistently refused the Republic any brilliant successes. Should the fall of German democracy prove definite, some of the blame must fall on foreign heads.

But not all of it, by a very long shot. In all matters relating to public life, the Germans, being intense subjectivists, shut within their problematic selves, unable to see with others' eyes, have an instinct for doing the wrong thing that partakes of genius. According to Lord d'Abernon, Gustav Stresemann himself complained that the "ignorance of the German Nationals, particularly of the country party (*Junkers*), regarding foreign policy was almost incredible. One could not discuss foreign policy with them for they said they were totally indifferent to the opinion of foreign countries." A striking example of this indifference was the appointment to the Chancellorship of Franz von Papen. That this *Junker* was a cultured and honorable gentleman does not alter the fact that owing to his activities in the United States during the neutrality period, he was considered by the majority of Americans and Englishmen as little better than a spy and dynamiter. The President wanted a "ruling class" Catholic to head the Cabinet, and had several thousand to choose from. The appointment of any but

one would have left American and British opinion unmoved. That one was appointed.

One might maintain that the same lack of instinct that cost Germany the war brought about the eclipse of the democracy.

Consider the situation: a politically retrograde people goes over to self-government. Unprepared. Almost unwillingly. Hopelessly divided. A numerically weak but highly daring and unscrupulous minority opposes democracy in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat. A numerically strong but temporarily discredited minority wishes to restore the old régime, or something very like it. The remainder, the Republicans, are a majority divided into several groups, separated by such stout wedges as property and religion. What must the rulers do? Clearly, establish, if only for a time, a system that will automatically exclude all but Republican parties from politics. This could be done either by definitely outlawing anti-Republican parties for ten years, or by adopting an electoral system that would automatically give a firm majority to the greatest single group of Republicans, which, by iron control of army, bureaucracy, schools, etc., would be in a position to stave off possible insurrection from right or left, while allowing the democratic idea time to grow in the minds of the people. Under such peculiar circumstances the President ought either to be elected by Parliament or be made subject to Parliament. The Parliament itself ought to be elected by a system which brought the people and their representatives into the most intimate personal contact—which definitely flattered the voters, in fact.

And instead? Instead of which, the President of the Republic was raised "above the parties" (and therefore must consider himself the representative of the Communists and the monarchists as well as of those who elected him); the presidential powers were used to minimize those of the Parliament.

Young Germans, like other Northerners, mature late. In the German Republic none might marry without the consent of parent or guardian, before the age of twenty-one. But the Weimar Constitution made all Germans eligible to vote at twenty.

The *Reichstag* was elected by so just a system that in an inexperienced country, divided into three parts on the fundamental question of State form, with small capacity for compromise, it was ineffectual almost to the point of comedy. Thorough-going proportional representation, especially among such philosophers as the Germans, was bound to yield a multiplicity of parties and party-lets. But multiplicity of parties is not in itself a source of insuperable ineptitude. In France, for instance, where cabinets rise and fall with the advent of the Atlantic cyclones, the fundamental policies remain as solidly established as the submarine gold vault of the *Banque de France*. For the French, like the English, and the Americans, are fundamentally united on principles: the rules of the game are sternly established and may the best man win! In Germany, where dispute—philosophic, economic, ethical, religious (God, Chancellor von Papen announced, is on the side of the farmers) about the game itself is unending, election on a heroically just basis of proportional representation had simply lamentable results.

Lamentable, in the first place, was the situation of the voter. If he was like most of his countrymen, he read but one newspaper and believed everything it said. But German newspapers are not written to inform readers but to create opinions. Events, incidents or mere facts that might disturb the desired effects are habitually colored, distorted or suppressed. The average German voter was highly conscious of his civic responsibilities. The electorate turned out on election days anywhere from eighty to ninety percent strong and did its duty, but the individual citizen knew even less than in most other countries about the facts at the back of the issues concerning which he was asked to decide.

But couldn't he at least rely upon his representatives? He could have if he had known them. He did not know them. He almost never had an opportunity even to hear them speak or study their faces. He voted for a list of twenty or thirty names most of which, for all they meant to him, might have been lifted at random from the telephone book. This list represented a party. The candidates, beginning at the top of the list, were elected as far down as the number of votes received could be divided by the electoral multiple of 60,000. Surplus votes were carried over to new lists and served to elect other equally invisible and generally unknown politicians. The relative places on the list were determined by the party bosses without any consultation of the voters. To make the lists attractive the politicians usually composed them like a *table d'hôte* menu—soup, fish, meat, salad, dessert—one statesman, one manual worker, one official, one woman, one aristocrat—to catch the eye

and stir the appetite of the respective classes of voters. By placing themselves at the top of the lists the party bosses could make their own election absolutely sure, whether the voters happened to want them or not. No Tammany machine ever concocted anything quite so brilliant as this. The alleged reason was to save "valuable political personalities" from the whims of the voters. But these "personalities" generally turned out to be identical with the party bosses who had compiled the lists.

Our friend the voter was not only asked to vote for a list instead of for a human being, but for one of some twenty to thirty lists. Half a dozen of them represented good-sized parties of well-known achievement and principles. A dozen others belonged to party-lets generally composed from some particular type of citizens, like the House Owners' Party, the Mortgage-Owning-Victims-of-Inflation Party, the Saloon-and-Café-Keepers' Party. After this there came the one-idea parties such as the "Three-Thousand-Dollar-Maximum-Salary-for-Officials Party, and the *Nausser Bund* of "Nature People" which on several occasions nearly succeeded in electing its long-haired prophet, Louis Christian Nausser. And finally there were family parties. One, if I remember correctly, put up three candidates all by the name of Wolfmeyer.

Confronted by such a choice the voter, male or female, eventually crossed a ballot. The number of deputies his "party" finally secured was a matter of those who voted for it, but its relative importance and power also depended on all the other votes cast. The first German Parliaments consisted of under five hundred deputies. There were over six hundred in the

one elected July 31, 1932. Of course the Wolfmeyers and other groups did not manage to place a member or two in the sacred Hall. But any reasonably conspicuous minority could secure representation. Every democratic *Reichstag* after the National Assembly of 1919 was composed of from ten to fifteen parties; until the rise of the National-Socialists, no single one of them ever controlled more than thirty percent of the total. Obtaining a majority was like trying to assemble guinea pigs on an open lawn—by the time three were collected one had wandered away. An election, under these circumstances, did unfortunately “give a remarkably accurate picture of the mind of the nation.” (*Republican Germany* by Quigley and Clark.) This was putting it mildly. In Great Britain the advent of a third party upset the normal play of forces. In the American Congress a small group of Insurgents were able to influence legislation decisively. Imagine the condition in these countries, had there been not one, but half a dozen small groups, each with power to pull out of a coalition and hand over the ship of State to the enemy! What a field for bargains, mutual back scratching, indirect bribery, and general intrigue!

Since, moreover, the average German considered his party either as his chosen instrument for securing concrete advantages—not unlike the Vested Interests in the United States—or else as the incarnation of a philosophy divinely *right*, compromise either meant sharing the spoils, or was impossible. As a result, the bulk of the *Reichstag* generally consisted of about half a dozen well nourished parties that controlled the jobs and took important decisions in a mysterious

Committee Huddle, the results of which only appeared later. On the flanks were the outsiders Right and Left, whose aim was to smash the system altogether. Quite deliberately, the Communists, who wanted proletarian dictatorship, and the National-Socialists, who howled for fascism, and the Nationalists, who yearned for some new "all-highest" Wilhelm, went out to utilize the democratic system in order to do away with it. Any means, from obstruction to ridicule and rough-house was licit.

Still, the parliamentary system might have worked better had the elected Members had an idea how the machinery was supposed to function. But, faithful subjects as they were, they continued to look for guidance where they had always found it, in the minds of the wise officials who had so brilliantly steered the State to defeat and revolution. The officials were magnanimously ready to forgive and be helpful. In a few short years their influence became nearly as great as it had been under the autocratic Empire: few Cabinet Ministers were able to exact real obedience from their employees, for the reason that the Constitution makers, by guaranteeing the officials permanence in their jobs under all circumstances short of murder or rape, had made them indifferent to parliamentary authority. Public opinion, educated in awe of autocracy, was cleverly brought to the side of the official. That the deputies themselves were anything but internally emancipated was shown by their astounding readiness to pay pensions to avowed enemies and to allow the former sovereigns to keep crown property to the value of hundreds of millions of dollars, with the excuse that it had belonged to them personally!

As compared with mere deputies, Cabinet Ministers were of course officials with authority. In theory any member could propose legislation. In practice nearly all bills originated with the Cabinet, and the officials were eager to prove to deputies just why their particular ideas of new laws were incompatible with sane jurisprudence. And the *Reichstag* did not say no.

Lack of democratic self-confidence was even more clearly shown in the fantastic practice of selecting Cabinet Ministers from non-partisan and non-political circles, instead of from among the deputies themselves. The head of a steamship company, the mayor of a moderate-sized city, a bureaucrat with the dust of thirty years' service upon his head—these were favorite executive choices of the German democracy.

Yet the fatal abdication of the *Reichstag* was in the vital matter of financial control. It came about gradually, of course; and like two thirds of everything anti-democratic in Germany, can be traced to misplaced patriotism. Since military expenditure must remain obscure to foreign eyes, the *Reichstag* permitted it to be spread about the budget and passed on in part to the Federal States and cities. Moreover, a large number of parliamentary appropriations under the control of the *Reichswehr* Ministry were made "transferable." Thus the Army commanders never lacked for pocket money, but the *Reichstag* soon lacked authority over the Army. And again, during passive resistance in the Ruhr, Gustav Stresemann purchased patriotism among the wavering industrialists by promising them "adequate compensation" for their losses. Legally his promise was no more binding than mine. But since the German Government dared not

admit publicly that it encouraged passive resistance and organized sabotage, there could be no public discussion. When the time came to pay the bill, date included, the deputies grumbled but none suggested that Stresemann be impeached. With the result that Cabinet Ministers came to consider themselves more as the legal executors than as the employees of the German people.

To this picture must be added the meekness with which one *Reichstag* allowed itself to be further hobbled by a law forbidding it to vote any appropriations without at the same time *and by the same majority* finding the funds. Obviously the situation was ripe for Cabinet and Presidential usurpation by Emergency Decrees long before Chancellor Heinrich Brüning finally decided that a chaotic Parliament that opposed his wishes had created a situation in which the "public safety and order" of the country were endangered and began to pour out these Emergency Decrees in vast quantities. All power had gradually leaked into the hands of anyone who secured the favor of the aged President and his military advisers. For the framers of the Constitution had done their work so imperfectly that none could say just where, in last analysis, authority really lay.

During thirteen years, the busy deputies had never been able to find the time to enact the necessary law limiting the dictatorial potentialities of Article 48 of the Constitution.

No wonder that liberty and democracy had failed to win the hearts of the people!

For in addition to the national Parliament, the country possessed some eighteen State Parliaments or Diets, all of them with the same electoral system,

the same parties, the same general practice. Thus the caricature of self-government was carried into the smaller remote communities—an event which the *Reichstag* members, by their stern refusal to allow their debates to be broadcasted, had sought to prevent.

The occasional practice of resorting to physical violence on the Parliament floor did nothing to strengthen the dignity of democratic practice, though it must be admitted that the anti-parliamentary parties were the chief offenders in this respect. On one occasion four National-Socialist deputies fell upon and seriously injured a former party member in the *Reichstag* restaurant and a riot ensued which was only ended by the entrance of the Vice-President of the Berlin Police Department at the head of a large squad. Yet the record for picturesque performance was unquestionably held by the Prussian Diet.

On May 25, 1932, a National-Socialist deputy demanded an investigation of the State's Attorney, who had secured the indictment of several National-Socialists for murder. At this point a Communist deputy cried out, "Your party is full of murderers!" and stepping to the rostrum, slapped the orator in the face.

Jumping to their feet, one hundred and sixty-two National-Socialists rushed upon fifty-seven Communists. For a quarter of an hour the battle raged. More than two hundred men belabored each other with fists, water bottles, ink-wells, pieces of broken benches and heavy books. The Communists were driven behind the ministerial benches and defended themselves as they could with the broken chairs of the Cabinet. One chair caught a Social-Democrat full on the chin and he fell unconscious.

The "neutral" deputies fled upstairs to the spectators' tribunes at the start and from there viewed the battle with mingled feelings. It ended with the expulsion of the Communist minority. The victorious National-Socialists reassembled their forces amid the broken remnants of furniture and in chorus sang their "Storm Song." The only serious victim was another Social-Democrat who "was caught between the raging forces of the radical parties and trampled as by wild cattle."

A few days later one of these National-Socialists was elected President of the Diet, with the task of ensuring orderly procedure!

Now considering that the mass of Prussians hankered for a strong, visible and dignified authority that would keep peace and order under all circumstances, they could hardly be blamed for turning away from a system that to their inexperienced eyes seemed to result inevitably in rowdiness. It became habitual to say that democracy in Germany had failed.

More correct would be the statement that "German democracy" failed—or tended to fail. For democracy in Germany never had a fair chance. An undemocratic people was confronted with a democratic machinery of the most complicated and, if you will, perfected sort—and was not successful with it. It was like asking a young person to begin an acquaintance with mechanics by mending an expensive watch. In fact, it is questionable if anything short of a community of saints could have made a real success of the German democratic system. Democracy in Germany had to suffer for the fact that its practitioners were not all saints.

CHAPTER XVI

"KULTUR-BOLSCHEWISMUS"

"He who compares our time with the rich and secure culture of the past and seeks for culprits responsible for the uneasy present, or who thinks that with a little goodwill the old condition could be re-established, behaves like a silly passenger on a sinking ocean liner who complains that the meals are not served on time and that he cannot take his baggage with him in the life-boat."

PAUL RENNER.

BERLIN in July, 1932. In the window of a bookstore near the most central street-corner of the city, the following books on display (titles translated):

The Witches' Love-Kettle

Eroticism in Photography

Sexual Errors

Flagellantism and Jesuit Confessions

The Labyrinth of Eroticism

Sadism and Masochism (fifty cents reduced from a dollar).

The Whip in Sexuality

Sappho and Lesbos

The Cruel Female

Massage Institutes (for adults only)

A magazine, *The Third Sex*

The Venal Female

*Venal Love Among Civilized Peoples
Places of Prostitution in Berlin*

Around the purely German products were the "love classics" of two continents. While I stood and wrote down the titles, a crowd of adolescents gathered and made remarks about "lustful foreigners." To them it was all an old story. Other book stores exhibited a similar line.

Somehow the unhampered exhibit and sale of these works was a symbol of German democracy and the "freest Republic in the world."

Most emphatically the significance of the German revolution must not be measured by its feebleness on the purely political plane. Its real significance lay elsewhere. In 1913 the average German, despite Nietzsche, still lived in a world of ordered certainties, with divinely specified religious, political, social and moral duties. By 1920, God, and with him, certainty, seemed to have withdrawn. The respectable subject suddenly awoke to the disintegration of standards that had been proceeding steadily since about 1860. First religion: the hold of Christianity over its followers had grown steadily weaker. One need only refer to the influence of such men as Comte, Darwin, Spencer and Haeckel. Next art had sickened, integral style giving way to eclecticism, atonal music, cubism, futurism, experimental literature. After the defeat and revolution, nothing of the old order seemed to be left.

In the unprejudiced, compassless environment that followed, the democratic rulers set about creating a new society.

Liberty—the liberty of catastrophe—lay in the atmosphere. The war had annihilated scruples, dis-

cipline, dogma. In all spheres the new order became radically libertarian.

Politically a paternal autocracy gave way to doctrinaire democracy of the most relentless type. A rigid, standardized class State became over night ultra-elastic—at least, in theory.

In the field of public ethics, the Republic registered a terrific slump. Registered, but did not really create. The thesis that the revolution turned an immaculate country into a swamp of corruption was a mere fairytale for the innocent voters. Public life in pre-war Germany had indeed been remarkably free from crass corruption. The officials were as impeccable as they were overbearing. But the first seeds of speculation were planted during the war, and quickly sprouted. As in other countries, army contractors distinguished themselves by unscrupulous greed. Public scandals were carefully hushed up lest they damp public enthusiasm, but towards the end the army profiteer was universally hated. When under the blockade, the food rations ran thin and hunger finally became general, the public morals collapsed altogether. With money one could acquire extra provisions. It was stated that in many country districts the *Landraete*, or local authorities, had a cellar-full of hidden food. With the exception of the idealistic few, before the end of the war all Germans who could afford it were eking out their scant meals by illicit purchases. The farmers profiteered with a will. By the time the Revolution came, the "immaculate country" so dear to later reactionaries, had long ceased to exist. What the Revolution did was to grant freedom to a people unused to it, and thereby indirectly facilitated

its misuse. A still worse blow to public ethics was given by the inflation. For if a State could expropriate the more helpless of the citizens with no qualms of conscience, why should not the citizens, so far as their wits allowed, with equal imperturbability expropriate the State and each other?

Public scandals were inevitable. The first culprit of importance was Matthias Erzberger. As the leader of the Catholic Center Party, Erzberger became, during the war, one of the most powerful influences in Germany. He signed the Armistice agreement with the other German delegates in Compiègne Forest. He was influential in bringing his party squarely behind the new Republic, in which he played a leading rôle. His sharp criticism was particularly directed against the wartime financial policy of the Imperial State Secretary, Karl Helfferich. Suddenly Erzberger was accused of unlawful practices—using his political information and power for personal ends. His chief accuser was, strange to say, none but Helfferich. The details were uninteresting: a Berlin court condemned Erzberger for parliamentary corruption.

Next in the row came the Sklarz scandal. The four Sklarz brothers, Leon, Heinrich, Waldemar and Georg, began in 1918 by taking over war material and selling it with large profit. They scrapped entire fortresses like Heligoland and Danzig. They were assisted by a whole flock of hungry deputies and officials. Their luxurious villa on Schwanenwerder Island near Berlin was open to all important people, and they gave a series of fantastically luxurious "parliamentary evenings." Finally they over-stepped the law too far. Arrested, they were eventually given heavy sentences.

A prize case was that of the Barmats, Julius, Salomon and Hirschel. Like the Sklarz brothers, the Barmats held court at Schwanenwerder. Julius Barmat was an adept in persuading financial institutions to lend him money against totally inadequate security, thanks to his friendships with important politicians. From the Prussian State Bank he managed to borrow forty-three and a half million marks on security worth two and a half millions. The Post Office lent him fourteen and a half millions more against bills for four millions—and Postmaster Hoefle received "loans" without interest from Barmat. Hoefle died in prison during the investigation and the Barmats went to jail—but only after their carnival had lasted several years.

A ramified case of municipal corruption involving a section of the Berlin city administration and the Mayor's wife centered around the three Sklarek brothers. Just after the Revolution, three little Jewish clothing dealers named Max, Willy and Leo Sklarek came to Berlin from Poland. Jehovah brought them into casual contact with city officials. They had a gift of pleasing. They received clothing contracts for municipal uniforms and hospital linen; they also received from the Municipal Bank vast sums against clothing orders that never existed. In return, they provided nearly the entire city administration with free suits of clothes, silk shirts and delicate underwear. From time to time they arranged Roman banquets with literally tubs of caviar and barrels of champagne; they kept a racing stable and extended vast hospitality. They never did seem to understand that they had done wrong. But, alas, after a trial that lasted three years, the Sklareks were given hard labor.

Respectable business was not immune. General Director Dumke of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Versicherungs Aktien Gesellschaft*, an important insurance company, thought out the somewhat moth-eaten but ever lucrative system of speculating with company money and crediting the company with the losses, himself with the profits. A little later, Ludwig Katzenellenbogen, a genial gambler who managed to build up a concern linking beer to cement, also used stockholders' property for private purposes. Like the late Ivar Kreuger, he had the mistaken idea of bucking the downward trend of world markets, was caught short—and condemned by the courts. For a time there was consternation in a great many German offices lest the investigation of similar practices be extended.

The Sklarz Brothers, the Barmats, the Sklareks, Katzenellenbogen, all were Jews and served splendidly for anti-semitic propaganda. But Dumke was incurably Aryan. Conspicuously Aryan were the Lahusen brothers, Karl and Friedrich, church-going deacons of Bremen, who built up a wool trust by ingenious financial jugglery. Even worse was the case of the *Devaheim*, a combined bank and home-purchasing co-operative organization under the control of the Protestant Home Missions. The managers were nearly all Lutheran pastors. All in all, a pretty piece of embezzlement of poor people's money by holy and wholly Aryan crooks.

Corruption under the German Republic was, sad to say, not limited to Jews and Republicans. Nonetheless, the end of autocracy coincided with the vast change mentioned above.

This change appeared to be most revolutionary

in social matters. Most striking was the change in the important field of sex.

The period immediately following the war saw throughout the world a sexual exuberance which, in Germany, reached an almost orgiastic intensity. The normal reaction to war discipline was strengthened here by the sexual outburst that inevitably follows calamity. For instance, in Sicily sexual tabu is abnormally strong: yet in the hours immediately following the complete destruction of Messina by earthquake (1908) with a loss of eighty-four thousand dead, the surrounding fields were thick with lovers celebrating their survival. So in post-revolutionary Germany, at least in the larger cities.

No one who lived through the period from 1919 to 1926 is likely to forget the sexual promiscuity that prevailed. If anything the women were the more aggressive. Morality, virginity, monogamy, even good taste, were treated as prejudice. "Let's go to bed together and see if we like each other"—half as joke, half seriously intended—was heard in all sorts of society. A Berlin season was not complete without half a hundred enormous public balls which all afforded comers the opportunities and sometimes the spectacle of a monkey cage. Adolescents went off together to celebrate "week-end marriages" as a matter of course. At private parties mattresses were strewn about for convenience and petting was only the beginning of the fun. Street acquaintance between the sexes was general and rarely failed to lead promptly to the desired degree of intimacy.

Throughout a town like Berlin, hotels and pensions made fortunes by letting rooms by the hour or day to baggageless, unregistered guests. Hundreds of

cabarets, pleasure resorts and the like, served for purposes of getting acquainted and acquiring the proper mood.

The general atmosphere was not so much vicious as sexually casual. It reflected a society in which sex had entirely lost any connotation of theological or even ethical sin.

Obviously enough, the physicians as part of this society, could not but share the prevailing views. Birth control became part of adolescent education. In a West German town an entire high-school class of girls turned up the day after graduation at a physician's office to be equipped with permanent anti-conception devices. Abortion was regularly undertaken by any number of otherwise entirely respectable surgeons. Its low price was the proof of its universality, for disaster could lead to severe punishment. An increasing stream of public opinion demanded the abolition of the law making it a crime. Anti-conception means were sold from slot machines in public places. Sexual hygiene made rapid improvement, despite promiscuity. Segregated prostitution disappeared and with it all restriction. The declaration of venereal disease became obligatory and the infection of others a crime. A few physicians publically advocated the artificial defloration of all girls at puberty for hygienic and psychological reasons. Nakedness flourished, on the stage, on the bathing beaches, in vast colonies. From experience I may affirm that public morals were in no sense worsened thereby. And since sex was free, pornography became public. Yet it is safe to say that, on the whole, its influence over the young, the feeble-minded and the unduly re-

pressed rather diminished with the prevailing freedom.

Somewhat more astonishing was the attitude toward what are called sexual perversions. After the war the laws punishing these practices were not changed, but they were ignored. An agitation was started to make perversions that did not entail the seduction or abuse of minors a purely private matter.

It is hard to conceive a much more tolerant society. The Constitution expressly forbade all censorship save in the matter of moving pictures. Close supervision was, however, applied to the broadcasting stations and later a couple of blue laws were passed, one destined to protect young people from movies and theaters intended only for adults, another condemning "filth and trash" in literature.

Not less striking were the reforms in social institutions. Women were given the vote as a matter of course and the major portion of the discrimination against them in property matters was abolished. The prisons were to some extent reformed. Liberal leaders urged that prisoners be assured a regular sex life. The parole system was expanded. Children were treated with much less severity than before. In the schools, notably in Prussia, the old semi-military discipline was replaced by a gentler, more liberal method. Corporal punishment became the exception. Throughout the country public health magnificently surmounted the trials of war and inflation, thanks to social care, free medical attention, generous social insurance, widely preached medical hygiene and an unrivaled organization of physical culture and sports. All in all, a more tolerant, cleaner and healthier, if not a hap-

pier or a more moral society than before the war.

Not less revolutionary was the new tendency in the arts. The fundamental theory of a new architecture had been given by the Viennese, Adolf Loos. Under the influence of the Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, and two or three Hollanders, there developed a new ornamentless form of building conditioned only by "material, purpose and proportion." Young German architects adopted this eagerly and came to take a leading place. In painting, where the German genius is less pronounced, the post-war production chiefly took the form either of radical social criticism (George Grosz); or of a wild Expressionism that was at bottom an attempt to communicate subjective emotion without regard to established means of communication; or of nude constructionism (significant form) closely related to the new architecture. The new furniture and craftwork, though less attractive perhaps than in France, was attractively experimental. In literature dadaism and free (senseless) words had some vogue, but no real success. With its moving pictures and above all on the stage, Germany in the immediate post-war years took a leading if not really dominant position. Theatrical ideas often came from Soviet Russia but only as successful applications of the cubistic and constructionist art that the Russians had already borrowed from western Europe. There was in fact absolutely nothing Russian about the German revolution. (Had there been, the leaders of the reaction would hardly have survived to lead it.)

Nonetheless, from conviction, ignorance or a desire to kill with a phrase, all the new developments of the revolution came to be known in conservative news-

papers and circles as *Kultur-Bolschewismus*—Bolshevized culture—and damned accordingly. The struggle against *Kultur-Bolschewismus* came to be a principal plank in the new nationalist-reactionary platform.

In this struggle the reactionaries found powerful allies in the churches.

The Catholic Church had been the stepchild of old Prussia and on this account Catholics accepted the revolution with something like satisfaction. Their leader, Matthias Erzberger, even managed to win the confidence of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils.

The Catholic Center party became a pillar of the democratic Republic. About 1930, the German bishops condemned National-Socialism and the whole clergy in Germany took the lead in fighting extreme nationalism of all kinds. Obviously no traditional Christian organization could welcome the new sexual freedom, or entirely accept an advanced libertarian attitude toward the arts and toward social institutions, but the Catholic influence was liberalism itself in comparison to that of the Protestants.

Protestantism means in Germany Lutheranism.

All the pet doctrines of Prussianism are found in the writings of the founder, Doctor Martin Luther. For him autocracy lay in God's plan; civil and religious authority, he wrote, should be mixed together in one hand, as "in a cake." Therefore in each Protestant German State before the Revolution the ruling prince was also the *summus episcopus*, the highest bishop. The unity of the church lay not in its doctrine but in the local dynasty. A prince "by God's grace" had not only a right to rule but he could rule

relentlessly. "The ass wants blows and the rabble to be ruled by violence, therefore God did not place a fox's tail in the hands of autocracy, but a sword." The Lutheran Church came to exist primarily in and through the State.

Moreover, the universality of Christian views was usually narrowed. Membership in this Church in no way prevented the narrowest patriotism—it actually furthered it! The Pope's attempt to bring about peace in 1917 awakened howls of rage from the German Protestants. Count Stolberg-Wernigerode wrote (*Deutsch-Evangelische Korrespondenz*, Aug. 22, 1917) that right is a matter of might and that relinquishment of conquered Belgium would mean suicide for Germany.

To such people the Revolution not only violated the will of God by overthrowing all the *summi episcopi*, the ruling princes, but it brought in a revolutionary, pacifistic, international spirit as well. On this account the Lutheran Church sought to strike the Republic with its anathema. All that the Republic had inaugurated, from gentle pedagogical methods to pacifism, was wrong, was immoral, was Godless. Since the Catholics supported the Republic, they too became a target and the old fight was resumed. "Not against Catholic piety and the Catholic belief" but to "oppose the world-political power of international Catholicism" (*Der Evangelische Bund*, by Oberpfarrer G. Arndt). From this it was but one step to embracing the cause of the nationalist parties in the political arena. In the Prussian election of 1932, the *Evangelische Bund*, the fighting organ of the German Lutherans, urgently admonished its members against the

Revolution and suggested voting for the parties that incorporated the "national movement." One good brother, Pastor Mattiat of Kerstlingerode, actually wrote: "We see in National-Socialism the German Liberation Movement, which we would profess even were it to be led in the name of the Devil."

And in answer to the suggestion that once a year the Lutheran Church consecrate a Sunday to peace and international reconciliation, the organ of the *Evangelische Bund* wrote:

"A Sunday of peace? In the eyes of simple men that is simply uncleanness. It is as repulsive as if you were to play cards by a corpse or sing cheap songs to a dying person." (Quoted in the *Tagebuch*, Jan. 16, 1932.)

What then was the cultural aim of the various reactionary groups? For the old-fashioned Nationalists, it consisted merely in a return to the good old pre-war days, strict family life, stern discipline, small freedom, segregated vice, good leg-shows, abortions only for the rich, soldiers all over the place, and a plentiful crop of illegitimate babies from all the servant girls in the neighborhood of garrisons. For a real description of the genuinely German culture that was planned to succeed the *Kultur-Bolschewismus* of the Republic, one had to go to the National-Socialists.

A foretaste of the Third Empire in such respects was given by the National-Socialist official, Wilhelm Frick, while Cabinet Minister in the State of Thuringia.

This energetic restorer of German art and morality, who began by increasing his own salary, consciously furthered patriotism and religion in the

schools, and tried to smother all non-religious and workmen's educational institutes. He introduced into the schools prayers that excited the children against the revolution and in favor of a war of liberation. He published edicts against jazz music and modern dancing under the name of "Negro-culture." He recommended a special type of war literature, three examples of which, entitled, "Unconquered on the Field," "Unconquered on the Sea," and "Unconquered in the Air," were written to encourage the pipe-dream of the "unbeaten army stabbed in the back." He caused the destruction of some mural paintings by Schlemmer and eliminated from the Castle Museum in Weimar works by Barlach, Dix, Feininger, Klee, Kokoschka and Lehmbruch, among the best that post-war Germany produced, on the ground that they had nothing in common with "Nordic German nature," but portrayed "eastern or other less valuable sub-humanity." To promote such "science" he had the "racial specialist," Hans Guenther, made professor at the University of Jena. He censored films and plays according to similar criteria. He prohibited the political meetings of opponents while loaning the State Theater for those of his own party. At these meetings the Republicans who had met in the same building in 1919 to shape the Republican Constitution were called a "horde of traitors and cowards."

Several of these measures were eventually declared unconstitutional and in the end Frick was eliminated by political strife before he had had an opportunity to reveal the full meaning of that "racial German teaching" that he hoped to make the basis of the newer education. Fortunately another National-So-

cialist, Professor Paul Schultze-Naumburg, an architect and writer, made this clear in his writings and speeches. Roughly the theory was as follows:

The foundation of all culture, according to Adolf Hitler (and who could know better?) is the *race*. In the past, this knowledge was criminally withheld from the Germans. In the Third Empire it would become the foundation of all education. In view of the superior meaning and significance of one's own blood, all foreign influences must be excluded. This meant a purely German art, architecture (no flat roofs!), literature, body of laws, and (why not?) religion. There never have been or can be any "human" aims but only the aims of different "blood groups." The Germans fought for a century to stave off Western liberalism, the result of intellectual materialism, but in the end succumbed. Now they must overcome this and go forward to the "country of German longing" (*Reich der Sehnsucht der Deutschen*). Obviously, this man was well along the way to demanding with Erich Ludendorff the revalorization of Wotan or some other purely German God. Professor Schultze-Naumburg was explicit that this German religion would have nothing to do with the "ethics of pity" (*Mitleidsmoral*).

How far this chimed with the views of the Lutheran Church can be left to Lutherans to decide. Certain it is that together with the Nationalists of various degrees of intensity, and the reactionaries of all shades, the National-Socialists aimed at nothing less than the blotting out of nearly everything that came into Germany in the wake of the revolution—whether you call it "Marxism," or "Jewish mentality," or *Kultur-Bolschewismus*.

How far did they succeed? The closing of the famous Art School or *Bauhaus* in Dessau, a world-wide center of distinguished modern art, by the National-Socialist city administration, revealed the general direction.

Politically, the Communists had the most to complain of. A considerable number of their moving pictures, their plays, their propaganda novels, have been forbidden. An annual calendar was in ten years confiscated seven times. A few phonograph records had the same fate. The motivation, quaintly enough, was either "preparation for high treason" or "offense against the safety of the State."

Under pretext of fighting communism, the system of Emergency Decrees was misused against public demonstrations of atheism. Catholics, Protestants, even Jews, might, it seems, legally carry their faith into the street; atheists might not. To be sure, the Constitution promised protection to all religions. But atheism, answered all the reactionaries, is not a religion. According to this logic, a Central African savage publicly worshipping a Priapic wooden doll was entitled to respect, but any open manifestations of the viewpoint of Ernst Heinrich Haeckel or Robert Ingersoll were not. The industrialist Krupp von Bohlen even recommended extirpating atheism as a fruitful method of combating the world economic depression!

In line with this tendency was the trial of the artist George Grosz, for blasphemy. Cultured individuals sometimes suspect that nothing can be more blasphemous than the assumption that blasphemy can be—that is, that Deity should be personally offended by human beliefs. But the law against blasphemy had

come over from before the war, and here was a chance to use it against Germany's greatest living caricaturist, whose labor sympathies were well known. Grosz was finally acquitted, but the Supreme Court ordered the destruction of his drawing showing Christ on the cross with a gas mask, being told by militarists to "shut up and do his duty." Other persons, notably a writer on the *Zwickauer Volksblatt*, Walther Victor, were imprisoned for insulting ecclesiastical institutions.

Many of the ultra-conservatives wished to take the vote away from women and restore absolute paternal authority. With this went the desire to revive whipping in the schools, and to make semi-military training obligatory until such time as open conscription could be restored. Naturally, the same mentality desired to dispense with humanity in prisons and asylums and to abolish a considerable portion of the social insurance.

Obviously enough, though it might suppress, culture reaction could not create. Neither Nationalism nor Communism can really take the place of a spontaneous religion. The disillusion that issued in *Kultur-Bolschewismus* had the virtue of sincerity and in time was bound to lose its crudity. Most of the young people quickly recovered from sexual promiscuity to the extent of observing a self-imposed discipline of an esthetic type. An attempt to deform the creative tendency of an age by shaping it to a past model was bound either to end in failure or, as in Fascist Italy, to result in its virtual paralysis. What the German reactionaries seem really to have wanted could be achieved by nothing less than a religious revival.

CHAPTER XVII

IRREMOVABLE JUDGES

THE windows of the court-rooms in the *Reichsgericht* in Leipsig, the Supreme Tribunal of Germany, are opaque. Not an image, not an impression, not a suggestion of the contemporary world outside can claim the attention of the nine red-robed justices behind the long bench. There they sat, insulated from the busy city of books and furs and trade fairs, dispensing legal decisions that affected the customs, property, security—and politics—of the nation. Doubtless the stuff of these decisions were drawn from dusty texts. But the emotional directive was found in their own hearts. These hearts, so far as a stranger could perceive, belonged not to the formally democratic present beyond the opaque panes of glass but to an autocratic past that stretched forward to touch hands with the coming reaction.

Some such hypothesis was necessary to an understanding of the astonishing pronouncements of the German Supreme Tribunal, and of the lower courts as well. For of all professions, the judges seemed the most resolute and effective opponents of the Republican régime, and in studying their activities under the democratic Republic the word *sabotage* involuntarily arises to the inquiring mind.

Opponents with impunity—or practically so. For they alone could virtually defy the new order with-

out, in most cases, serious personal risk, owing to the principle of "judicial irremovability" that the Republic inherited from the Empire, as it inherited the persons of most of the judges. This meant simply, that, short of murder or grand larceny, judges could not be dismissed or retired. In the case of no other body, save that of the Army, was the unhappy optimism of the Republicans better demonstrated than by their failure to fill the benches in every court in Germany with Democrats who could be trusted to protect the new régime against all attacks. For a large share of the judiciary in practice steadily defended the institutions, mentality, laws and prestige of the former autocratic Empire against the modern "spirit of disintegration" incorporate in the Constitution of Weimar.

After all, it is not hard to explain. Pre-war Prussia was a class state built around an army. Its ideals were power, discipline and obedience. Reverence for power and sense of duty were spread throughout society. The beauty of servility was hammered into inferiors by more than Spartan methods. The chief danger was class upheaval. Therefore Socialists became social outcasts. The rulers unflinchingly enforced a system of class justice whose principle was, not that all men are equal before the law, but "*Jedem das Seine*"—"to each the appropriate." Scandals among the ruling few were carefully hushed lest the prestige of the system be shaken.

In this pyramid the social strata were clearly visible. At the top the "all highest" Emperor, and around him the other ruling princes and great nobles. Then the God-like army officers. Just below them came

the officials, the semi-divine *Beamten*, a class that included judges, professors, school-teachers and even postmen. The social background for the better places in the Army and the higher bureaucracy was furnished by the land-owning aristocracy, the merchant patricians of such old trading towns as Hamburg and Bremen, and the newer industrial and banking barons. The middle class supplied the bulk of the officials. Officials looked down upon non-officials as a matter of course and received meager payment but unlimited social consideration and high sounding titles and decorations, not to speak of minor concrete privileges.

Since the heart of the State was the Army, the soldiers set the tone. The arrogance of the well-born Prussian officer often equaled that of a Prince of the Church or a Japanese Samurai. Therefore the social aim of the "right-thinking" German with any education was to become an officer in the Army reserve and carry a sword at maneuvers. Socially independent or radical-minded citizens could not become reserve officers, or if by error they did, their position was soon made unbearable. The ruling caste, from the Emperor to the lowest postman and village tax collector, hung together with marvelous cohesion. By the simple process of eliminating independent conduct, the rulers cemented their people into a supremely effective military organ. This was possible perhaps only with Germans, for the vast majority of this people literally enjoy being told what to do: only thus can they unfold their unrivaled capacity for devotion to a cause. The human result is marvelously described in the pre-war novel of Heinrich Mann, *The Subject*.

In no social classes were the narrowing results of this system more evident than in the "good, middle-class families," severely old-fashioned, patriarchal, plain-living, slightly rough and supremely conscious of their merits of honesty, fidelity, snobbery and patriotism. These were the families that produced most of the judges on the bench today. For, to the Anglo-Saxon, the fact is strange that the magistracy in Imperial Germany in no sense represented the social or intellectual cream of the law schools. At a certain point the student of law had—and still has—the choice of profession. In Imperial days the socially elect went into the Administration and became "higher officials." The next choice went into the Government railway service or the tax system. The most intelligent became lawyers. The remainder became judges and prosecuting attorneys. Socially and financially they represented that narrow-minded, virtuous, snobbish middle class which furnished the truest and least self-seeking partisans of autocracy.

The war shattered the old Army. The Revolution broke the morale of the aristocracy. To some extent the Republicans leavened the administrative bureaucracy with democratic elements. But in deference to the principle of "judicial irremovability," the Imperial magistracy was carried over in bloc, unmenaced and unconverted, into the Republican society.

The Republic paid them just as much or as little as the Empire had done. A *Senatspräsident* in the *Reichsgericht*, the highest official in the judicial hierarchy, received (1932) eighteen thousand marks a year, or about forty-five hundred dollars. The run of the judges, the *Amtsgerichtsräte* and *Landgerichtsräte*, received from forty-four hundred to eighty-four

hundred marks annually. To be sure, they got less than any number of administrative officials, infinitely less than the mayors of unimportant cities. But this is not what the judges resented. Most of them felt that they had lost caste for the reason that under the Republic, despite a deference that amazes foreigners, officials did not enjoy anything like the consideration they had enjoyed under the Empire. Business men, Socialist politicians, successful lawyers, even leading journalists sometimes achieved more prestige and power. Add to this that the judges whom the Republic took over unbaptized represented the most stubbornly conservative element in the old Empire, and their hostility to the new democracy is explained so far as it can be explained.

Life in Germany changed, the political Constitution changed, the social layers became mixed; but for the most part the magistracy, the laws and the law schools where new magistrates were produced, remained unchanged. Natural, therefore, that the laws and the ancient conceptions behind them, should, in these sheltered magisterial minds, take precedence over a Constitution made by a lot of Jews and Socialists and "traitors."

Natural, too, that in conspiring with the other reactionary groups to nullify the democracy, these judges should have felt themselves the defenders of the German State—the *real* German State—against the destructive tendencies of a more or less temporary aberration. Undoubtedly many of them would have agreed with the appellate judge, Poehner, who, charged with treason for revolting with Adolf Hitler against the Weimar Republic (1923), addressed the Munich court as follows:

“What kind of a State was created in November, 1918? This deception of the people was carried out by Jews, deserters and hired traitors. This Government is no God-sent Authority in the Christian sense. These fellows of different race are foreign rulers. The so-called *Reichspräsident* (Ebert) was not elected by the people but set upon the throne by a clique.”

Some day the “real Germany” would awake again.

Around the judges a civilization, a world, that had lasted many centuries, was breaking down. Therefore from the bench they continued to defend a memory: reverence for the State, for existing authority, for the upper classes, for one’s betters, for the judge! Their own class, the upper levels of society, nobility, University-Corps brothers, officers, fellow officials, Nationalists, must be judged differently from the common herd in the streets: they *are* different. And they and the rich and the patriotic are *right* because they are conservative. If justice is the rigid and impartial application of existing law, the German magistrates could hardly have desired to be just. An Upper Prosecutor (*Oberstaatsanwalt*) Baron von Steinaecker, a National-Socialist, actually issued a public plea for “selective justice”: heavy sentences for “materialistic” Communists and light ones for noble patriots whose aims were “honor, freedom, fatherland.”

The judicial contribution to the reaction can, for convenience’s sake, be classified under four heads: 1) apparent discrimination between social classes; 2) apparent discrimination between political law-breakers; 3) apparent discrimination in favor of ancient ideas like ruling nobility, militarism, parental authority, land-owning aristocracy, and against “modern” notions like pacifism, atheism, blasphemy and en-

franchised Jewry; 4) contempt for the Republic, its symbols and its representatives. These at least were the principal charges made against the judges by even conservative Republicans and it must be said that a great deal of evidence was offered for the charge.

In 1932, there appeared a novel, *For They Know What They Are Doing*, which is one long account of judicial scandals. Yet the author, Ernst Ottwalt, guaranteed the reality of each case thus fictitiously described. The following are taken from his book:

An unemployed hungry man smashes a shop window and takes a sausage: penalty, seven months in prison. Another hungry man, once before punished for begging, tries to rob a postman: penalty, two years in prison. A feeble-minded individual, cold and poor, steals a horse blanket; second offense: penalty, one year in prison.

Yet—a well-to-do merchant receives only nine months in prison for fraud. A count, a large landowner, shoots away the kidneys of a day laborer whom he thinks “might” be poaching, and goes scot free. It is “Hunter’s Custom” (*Waidmannsbrauch*).

So much for Ottwalt. The newspapers printed cases of postmen and petty officials who received months of imprisonment for stealing a few postage stamps, while the directors of large companies accused of misappropriation or even direct stealing were often punished with extreme leniency. Hugo Stinnes, Jr., son of the great industrialist, got off completely under circumstances that might well have proved too much for anyone less well connected. It suggested class discrimination.

In the matter of political discrimination, the evi-

dence is even larger. Murder, insurrection, rioting, treason, libel—all seemed different crimes under the German Republic according to the political credo of the doers. Communists, to be sure, caught it hardest. Their representatives in the temporary Soviet Government in Bavaria were in part executed, in part given severe sentences, but the reactionary officers and officials who revolted under Wolfgang Kapp in 1920 and for a few days terrorized Berlin, were, with one exception never sentenced at all. The murders of prominent Republicans, Erzberger and Rathenau, were never properly atoned for. Communists who attempted to convert soldiers, or who preached resistance to the law, were punished ruthlessly, but when, two hours ride from Berlin, the former Imperial General, Sixt von Arnim, made a speech to theoretically Republican troops in which he pleaded for monarchy, he was let off entirely. Attorney General Ebermeyer stated that a general cannot commit high treason; Arnim was merely making use of his constitutional right to free speech (Ernst Ottwalt).

In minor offenses, the legal practice seemed even more politically one-sided. The National-Socialist who declared that Chancellor Wilhelm Marx took money from England for signing the London agreement of 1924, was condemned to such an insignificant penalty that this mildest of statesmen declared that he had learned his lesson and would never sue for libel in Germany again. There was method in the Court's decision. In 1924 a judge in Magdeburg refused to condemn persons who declared Fritz Ebert had committed treason in January, 1918. At the time of the trial Ebert was President of the German *Reich*!

Any number of similar cases could be cited. For years Nationalists who carried forbidden weapons often escaped untouched or with trifling sentences but the radical Paul Klingel was condemned by the court in Schweidnitz to fifteen months prison for carrying arms. A Communist workman in Remscheid who, after an altercation with a group of National-Socialists, fired a revolver six times in the air to frighten them, received *two years' prison*. Fifteen National-Socialists who killed a certain Bassy in Bankau were acquitted by the judge on the ground that the "behavior of the dead man" was responsible for the murder.

Four National-Socialists in Mannheim who had been condemned to two years at hard labor for unwarranted possession of high explosives, were not only white-washed as to their motives by the court but their leader and his chauffeur were released after a few days owing to "bad health" and fled.

Ex-Chancellor Heinrich Brüning issued an Emergency Decree (March 28, 1931) greatly increasing the penalty for the illicit carrying of deadly weapons. Yet in Spring of 1932 the *Reichsgericht*, the Supreme Court, decided that "whoever continuously *must fear* attacks by his (political) opponents, is in a state of continual self-defense. When in this situation he carries a weapon with him, he does not violate the Fire Arms Law. His conduct is covered by self-defense."

Well, why not? you may ask.

Why not, indeed, innocent reader, in a country whose judges were politically impartial, but let us suppose we were in a country of partisan judges.

Then the following would be possible: National-Socialists carrying arms without license could be exonerated from blame on the ground that their political enemies, the Communists and Republicans, were dangerous rowdies; Communists or Republicans who did the same might be condemned on the ground that their National-Socialist opponents were harmless gentlemen and fear of attack was groundless.

In fundamental matters the German people were divided into three factions: the Communists, the Republicans and the Reactionaries. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that not only the Communists were discriminated against in favor of the Reactionaries, but the Republicans as well. The judges may have considered such discrimination right and proper, but if so, how could they for so many years accept the salary of the Republic with a clear conscience?

Equally visible was the sympathy of the courts for certain pet ideas, their aversion for others. The former sovereigns enjoyed such a high degree of favor that practically all their suits against the State for ever larger shares of former crown property were successful.

The Army was, it appears, considered to be the most genuine representative of the State, and its members could hardly do wrong. Persons who acted (perhaps illegally) with the avowed aim of working for or with the Army could be reasonably sure of the sympathetic ear of the German magistrates. An attempt was even made to condemn a well-known publicist for an article in which he declared "soldiers are murderers," thus echoing the views of many of the greatest men who ever lived. This question nor-

mally called for settlement by etymologists and authors: what is the meaning of the word murder? The German judges acquitted, but the Prosecutor appealed the case. More successful was the prosecution against Werner Thormann who, with some show of reason, accused the *Reichswehr* Ministry of "wasting the taxes of the needy population to finance a military censorship." Thormann was condemned!

Condemned, too, "for insulting the Army," was a radio announcer who introduced a military march with the comment that this "military pomp" seemed "like a voice from the grave." So far did this sympathetic defense of military prestige go that when, in 1920, a workman shot one of the mutinous rebels of Wolfgang Kapp, instead of being decorated by the Republic, he was condemned to fifteen years hard labor, while the rebellious soldiers themselves who, in Thuringia, shot down workmen, were acquitted.

The treatment of pacifism by the Republican courts is a chapter for itself. While the majority of the Germans accepted the renascent militarism with enthusiasm and considered external independence more important than internal freedom, there existed a small group of stubborn pacifists who fearlessly pitted their lives and liberty against the governmental machine. They preached refusal to fight under any circumstances, and systematically denounced everything done by the Army and the State authorities that seemed to them a breach of the military limitations imposed upon Germany by the Versailles Treaty. In consequence they were repeatedly charged with treason and condemned. Their position was, that since the Versailles Treaty constituted part of the German law, one could not logically be punished for denounc-

ing violations of it. As well be sent to jail for denouncing rape or murder! The Government, which saw in the re-establishment of Germany's military power almost the prime aim of its existence, took the attitude that no treaty could give individual Germans the right to denounce actions, real or unreal, which the Government did not wish to admit. For, as War Minister Groener once said, those who denounced supposed violations of the Versailles Treaty were postponing the day of Germany's liberation.

It did not occur to him, apparently, that those who seemed to be conniving at Treaty violation were perhaps postponing the day of liberation even more surely. The impression is irresistible that to maintain the appearance of total German disarmament the *Reichsgericht* developed a special, logically untenable, legal theory and practice. In the case of Carl von Ossietzky and Walter Kreiser this fact seems to have been admitted. Part of the secret sentence (revealed by Kreiser, *Echo de Paris*, April 9, 1932) ran (my translation):

"The information was in no sense known to foreign governments before its publication. This information corresponds to fact. The *Heeresleitung* (army leaders), despite the Versailles Treaty and the Aeronautic Agreement of Paris, *from the point of view of an imperious necessity above the laws*, considered itself obliged to carry out this reorganization in the interest of the national defense."

Notable is the fact that as the reaction gained confidence the number of prosecutions for high treason and treason correspondingly increased. In the *Juristische Wochenschrift*, the *Reichsgericht* President gave the following figures: 1929, 34 cases; 1930, 58

cases; 1931, 109 cases; first quarter 1932, 69 cases. Obviously a growing tendency on the part of the German people to betray their country. The figure of prosecutions for atheism and blasphemy showed the same increase.

The German judges furthermore disliked atheists and were insensitive to insults of Jews. But toward landowners they were of the truly paternal tenderness shared by nearly all the reactionaries. Peasants are for the most part conservative, they vote for their betters, they produce many children, they go to church. As Chancellor Franz von Papen put it in a public utterance (June 11, 1932), love of the soil is a preliminary to spiritual renewal, since it is the original source of communion with God and his creation.

Some similarly religious motive must have been in the minds of the *Reichsgericht* judges when they delivered a judgment that with one blow shattered the basis of legality throughout Germany! A group of East Prussian farmers, threatened by expropriation for non-payment of taxes and mortgages, decided to defend their property with violence. They broke up forced sales, menaced prospective buyers, and at Pillkallen, set upon the police. The lower courts gave prison sentences of a few months; the agricultural zealots in the *Reichsgericht* reversed the sentences on the ground of "super-legal emergency" (*übergesetzlichen Notstand*). This decision, thanks to which peasants who did not pay their debts and taxes, could not thereafter be compelled to do so, but might with impunity throw police and creditors downstairs, encouraged other judges in a lower court in Oldenburg to acquit under similar circumstances. With the result

that a situation was created whereby *no one* in Germany could logically be dispossessed of property for failure to pay debts and taxes, for in a period of world depression, it is impossible to find reasons why the "super-legal emergency" applicable to peasants should not be equally applied to bankers, cigar-store proprietors and workmen. But perhaps love of the cigar-store is not an original source of communion with God.

This sensitiveness of the magistracy did not extend to the democratic Republic, and temporary laws were repeatedly enacted to protect it, without much result. Within a few years the courts at various times decided that expressions like "Jew Republic," "Grafter Republic," "Sow State," "Sow Republic," "the Republic was born out of treason and mutiny," "the Republic is cow dung," did not constitute insults to the State, and that to call the flag of the Republic "manure" and to drag it down without authority from public buildings was entirely right and proper. A prosecutor in Silesia even had the bright idea of refusing to defend ~~insults~~ to the legal flag of his country on the ground that, "being supported by the Democrats alone," it was really a "party flag," while the old Imperial banner dear to all conservative parties was to be considered "non-partisan."

It must, in justice to the German judges, be said that everything here related of them applied with even greater force to the Public Prosecutors. These officials are directly under the various State and the national Ministries of Justice and receive regular instructions as to the action to be taken in specific legal cases. Where they do not chose to prosecute, as in any number of cases where the reactionaries would

have been affected, the responsibility lies directly with the political authorities. Even the best judges could do nothing when the State's Attorney saw no ground to prosecute.

And the patient Griseldas of Republicans did nothing? Nothing effective. When they did seek to interfere they only made matters worse. Having realized all too late the danger of allowing mortal enemies of democracy to sit on the bench, but lacking the nerve to send the whole lot packing by changing the law about judicial irremovability, they occasionally brought political pressure to bear upon the magistrates. Thereafter the reactionaries, in the person of one Gottfried Zarnow, were able to publish two documented volumes charging the Republican authorities, chiefly in Prussia, with interfering with the impartial administration of justice, sometimes in order to protect corruption in high places. A bad joke, but an effective one, for thereupon the matter was raised in the Prussian Diet and an official investigation was opened.

Obviously, conservative rulers would never be required to use any such means and one could hardly imagine anything more complete than the change that came over the superior courts with the advent to power of Franz von Papen and his baron friends. For as the offspring of one of the thirty-six noble families constituting the "Westphalian Chivalry," Papen represented all that the magistrates wished to serve. His was a Cabinet, not of Socialists and Pacifists and Jews, but of patriotic gentlemen of wealth and station. Therefore it was entitled to constitute that "God-sent authority" referred to by Judge Pochner.

CHAPTER XVIII

"PERISH THE JEW!"

"So stand the storm battalions
Ready for racial fight,
Only when Jews lie bleeding
Can we be really free."

NATIONAL-SOCIALIST LITTLE SONG BOOK.

"The natural hostility of the peasant towards the Jews . . . must be whipped up to a frenzy."

Party instructions for National-Socialist leaders, March 15, 1931.

" . . . the strongest, toughest and purest race now living in Europe."

Friedrich Nietzsche's comment on the Jews.

ONE Spring day in the year 1932, a yellow-haired German maiden was strolling along the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, when an unshaved, frowzy-looking individual thrust a card into her hand and vanished into the crowd. She glanced at the card, started, grew slightly pale and finally laughed. This is what she read:

"You associate with a Jew.

"It is unworthy of a German woman to pay any attention at all to a Jew—to say nothing of mixing with him. We suppose that you are not aware of the import of your action, and warn you.

"Should it result from our further observations that this warning has had no influence upon you, that is, that you continue to be-Jew yourself, then your name will be put down in the register of those women who possessed no pride of race and threw themselves away on a Jew. In a new Germany, a visible sign will be etched or branded on the face of such persons, as a sign for every German man.

"Do not believe that this is a joke or an empty threat. You have been warned and will be further observed."

This card came to my hands.

When the young lady mentioned the matter to the police, she was told that although such cards had frequently been distributed in public places, it had been impossible to trace their origin. It was possible that they originated with persons associated with or friendly to the National-Socialist party. It was also possible that they were the work of some feeble-minded fanatic whose brain had been turned by the anti-semitic campaign raging throughout contemporary Germany.

It is an old story. Anti-semitism has been in the world ever since the day, long before Christ, when the triumphant Greek came into Palestine and the conquered Jew refused his gifts in the name of a superior mission. (Kastein, *Eine Geschichte der Juden.*) By 140 B.C. the Jews were scattered throughout the Mediterranean world, and in 85 B.C. Strabo, the Grecian geographer, wrote that there was no place in the world without its Jews. Later Romans, Horace, Fuscus, Ovid and Seneca, found this fact irritating. From its beginning with Paul of Tarsus, ecclesiastical

Christianity has been hostile to Israel, primarily owing to the latter's stubborn refusal to admit Christian superiority. It was the Christian who, by driving the Jews out of normal occupations, compelled them to become Europe's bankers, until finally the Pope gave a special dispensation to the Lombards to lend money at interest.

There is good reason to suspect the presence of Jews in old Roman Germany in many places, Aix-la-Chapelle, Andernach, Augsburg, Boppard, Coblenz, Cologne, Mayence, Regensburg, Strassburg, Trier and Worms (Dr. Paul Rieger, *Vom Heimatrecht der deutschen Juden*). In the tenth century the Jews in Germany were subject to such persecution that the Rhenish communities wrote to their brothers in Palestine asking if there were no signs of the approaching salvation, since according to tradition final salvation would be preceded by terrible persecution.

Less directly anti-semitic than Russians, Poles and Roumanians, pre-war Germany nonetheless treated the Jews (even when baptized) as second-class subjects, good enough to fill the army ranks but unfit for the finer professions. Formally released from legal fetters in Prussia (1869), the Jews remained nonetheless subject to hatred and boycott. The Romantics, with their insistence on the value of emotion and patriotism, the Conservatives who identified Jewry with economic and political liberalism, the smaller merchants who feared the Jew's superiority in business, all combined to keep up an atmosphere of hatred and hostility, which no amount of mere personal influence by men like Lagarde, Wagner, Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Stoecker the Court Preacher

and Eugen Duering could have managed to create. Legally equal as he was, in practice the Jew in Imperial Germany was barred from many social positions. He could not—unless baptized and very rich—enter a crack dueling corps in the university, he might not become an officer (for somehow no Jew could pass the officer's examination), he could not reach the higher places in the administration.

The war changed this: two thousand Jews were prepared as officers, mostly in the infantry, and sent to the trenches where 12,000 Jews in all died for Germany. Yet short-sighted anti-semitism prevented the Aryan generals from making full use of world-famous Jewish chemists in the important matter of gas warfare. Then came the Revolution and for a time all Germans were really equal before the law.

Thirteen years later many Jewish citizens enjoyed less real freedom and a socially less agreeable life than before the war.

Consider the situation in the Spring of 1932 of Neustadt-on-the-Aisch, a small Protestant town of 5,000 inhabitants, in Central Franconia. From time to time the National-Socialist Administration raised the swastika flag of anti-semitism over the town-hall. All municipal business was transacted exclusively with "German" firms. Swastika sentinels stood before shops owned by Jews and noted down the names of those who bought there for social ~~boycott~~. Out-of-town peasants were roughly directed to stores kept by "Germans"—meaning National-Socialists.

Christians dared not acknowledge their old Jewish friends on the street or in the taverns. At a political meeting the National-Socialist deputy Roth com-

plained bitterly that members of his party still dared greet Jewish friends. The president of a Jewish organization, a war veteran, one of the finest gymnasts in town, who had several times won the coveted title of "king of marksmen" (*Schützenkönig*), was socially boycotted by acquaintances of thirty-years standing and was threatened with expulsion from the shooting club. When a representative of a Jewish organization visited the town, none of the local Jews dared to meet him at the station, the ensuing meeting was held in the greatest secrecy and the assembled Jews departed one by one, lest the anti-semitic fanatics should realize a meeting had been held. For these fanatics had made it clear that when Hitler came to power they expected a "night's franchise" (*Freinacht*) in which to murder and rob!

The situation of this small town was only an extreme case of something that had spread rapidly throughout Protestant Germany.

How could such a condition have been allowed to develop in a civilized country?

Before the war, Socialists and Jews were bracketed together as inferiors. As a result a large number of Jews entered the Social-Democratic party which inherited power as a result of the Revolution. Other Jews flocked to the Democratic party, a group which certainly overlooked no chance to favor the interests of trade, banking and the stock exchange as against agriculture and manufacturing.

A number of outspoken revolutionary leaders, Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin, Erich Meuhsem and Ernst Toller in Munich, were Jews. The Jews certainly played an important part in the creation and development of

Russian Bolshevism. Therefore in German Nationalist circles, it was fairly easy to rig up the legend of the "destructive Jew," revolutionary and liberal capitalist at the same time (!) and in any case hostile to the pure German tradition. In post-war politics any number of Jews rose to leadership. Both in the *Reich* and in the Federal States, Jews, particularly Social-Democrats, became Cabinet Ministers. In the bureaucracy, the Jews rose rapidly to leading positions and until about 1930 their number seemed on the increase. Exposed positions like that of the vice-presidency of the Berlin police were occupied by Jews whom sudden emancipation from the former position of inferiority certainly had not made more modest. In the all-important administration of Prussia, any number of strategic positions came into the hands of Hebrews, and under the system of Emergency Decrees installed by the Catholic, Heinrich Brüning, a telephone conversation between three Jews in Ministerial offices could result in the suspension of any periodical or newspaper in the State. In the Finance Ministries of the *Reich* and the States, the Jews exercised a far-reaching and generally salutary influence. In short, after the Revolution, the Jews came in Germany to play in politics and administration that same considerable part that they had previously won by open competition in business, trade, banking, the Press, the arts, the sciences and the intellectual and cultural life of the country. And thereby the impression was strengthened that Germany, a country with a mission of its own, had fallen into the hands of "foreigners of inferior race." These "foreigners of inferior race," the Jews, became symbolic objects of that German re-

action which nothing but frenzied blindness or self-seeking calculation could greet as "national awakening." This reaction was directed against the German defeat and the Treaty of Versailles, hence becoming xenophobe; it was directed against the November Revolution and opposed liberal democracy; and it sought to eliminate the rights and influence of labor. In the Jews it saw a combination of those traits that it most abhorred, for the Jew was "foreign," democratic, often socialistic, internationalist and pacifist at the same time! Therefore, throughout Nationalist Germany the cry became loud:

"Germany awake and perish the Jew!"

From its three-fold beginning about the year 1920 the National-Socialist movement was anti-semitic. The agrarians of Count Ernst zu Reventlow, the German Social Party of Richard Kunze, the Ludendorff-Hitler beer-house rebels of 1923, simply revived the anti-semitic arguments of the nineteenth century. Ludendorff later added a comic note by his discovery of an alliance between the international Jesuits, the Free Masons and the Jews to overthrow national States, but even this was merely an embroidered edition of the "Wise Men of Zion" legend, according to which a few marvelous old rabbis sit together in secret somewhere and rule the world.

Refreshingly romantic were the religious views of Dietrich Klagges, National-Socialist Minister of the State of Brunswick. Klagges, an earnest man of the old school, sought a reconciliation between Christianity and Germanism of the Edda type—between Jesus of Nazareth and Wotan, Thor and the other tavern gods. He found it only after rejecting everything in

the "Jewish Bible" but an expurgated version of the Gospel according to Saint Mark. Having done this, he and his friends felt, as he triumphantly wrote, that "here was the true Jesus, and this Jesus was through and through un-Jewish, rather, he was Indo-germanic, he was German!" (Dietrich Klagges: *Das Urevangelium Jesu, der deutsche Glaube*). At this point, it may be supposed, the bells began to peal.

In his autobiography, *My Struggle*, Adolf Hitler, made the Jews, among their many other sins, responsible for the spread of socialism and venereal disease, and traced an historical account of their activity in Germany which must astonish historians.

But what is the use of piercing Semitic villainy if it does not lead the keen-eyed Aryan to power? To utilize such superior insight, it was necessary to make the Germans race-conscious. For twelve years the National-Socialist movement preached anti-semitism.

If Germany lost the war, the Jews, betrayed it.

If the Kaiser and the grand old order had to go, the fault lay with the Jewish revolutionaries.

If money vanished during the inflation, look for it in the pockets of Israel.

If you were unemployed, you need merely note how many Jews still had good safe jobs. If as lawyer, physician, scientist, professor, teacher, artist, success did not smile upon you, it was because the Jews had taken the best for themselves.

When a high school youth failed in his mathematics, it was because Jewish influence in German schools caused over-importance to be laid on numbers and rationality: true Germans "think with their blood."

If a shopkeeper went broke, the proper course was to break the windows of the Jewish department store. If a manufacturer could not keep up with technical methods, the fault lay with Jewish usurers in the banks. For whereas German capital is "creative," Jewish capital is "appropriative!"

In short, if girls went wrong and religion decayed, if Germany paid reparations to negroid French and greedy Americans, if abortion became common and architects built flat roofs and the rumba swept the globe, the fault of it all lay with the Jews!

Sixty-four million sturdy Nordics (at least in aspiration) felt themselves threatened by less than six hundred thousand Hebrews!

The National-Socialist propaganda made the German people Jew-conscious at the price of their natural sanity. What did that matter if only Hitler would come to power!

Of what did this propaganda consist? Speeches, the printed word, pictures, suggestion, legend, lies, a special racial "science" on a level with witch-ducking, anything was welcome that served the purpose.

"The Jew is the cause and beneficiary of our national slavery. He ruined our race, rotted our morals, hollowed out our way of life and broke our strength." (From an often reprinted National-Socialist proclamation).

"The Jew is the tape worm in the human organism and it is our duty to exterminate him." (Count Ernst zu Reventlow).

The Jews, it was stated, believe in the ritual murder of Christians, practice usury on religious grounds, ravish innocent Christian girls, corrupt honest Ger-

man authorities, drink the blood of foreign races. And what are these Jews? Listen, brother Aryans:

"The Jew is the born ravisher of races. Criminal outcasts from the most desperate peoples once came together in the desert under the leadership of the law-giver, Moses, and formed the Jewish people. Thus out of thousands of years of in-breeding there developed the mongrel race of curs which we see before us in the contemporary Jew. This Jew is forced by his blood to ruin and to decompose all other races. He is driven by his blood and by his inborn abnormal sensuality to ravish non-Jewish women and girls." (*Der Stürmer*, October, 1931.) The same publication printed a series of posters showing disgusting Semites wading through seas of Christian blood, kicking a pregnant Christian woman in the abdomen, releasing snakes from a box marked "The Talmud" upon a naked Christian woman, picking the pocket of a pilloried German workman. Can you wonder that, on the basis of such "racial science," the young patriots tramped the towns singing, "When Jewish blood spurts from under the knife, then all is twice as good?"

All this gory fancy was after all nothing but popular brutality. What are we to think of the scientific theories of some hundreds of National-Socialist physicians and surgeons who banded themselves together for the express purpose of taking the patients away from the Jewish physicians? In absolute contradiction to everything legitimately known as science, these "educated" products of political ambition announced that "it is the common knowledge of all racial investigation today that the Nordic race is the noblest blossom on the human tree" (Dr. Kaiser of Berlin,

according to *Der Freiheitskampf*, December 9, 1931). Races are different in value, according to this theory. Therefore men are unequal, any justification for democracy and socialism is eliminated, the rule of superior races over inferior again acquires legitimacy, and the mixture of noble with less noble races becomes a crime. The physicians, unlike the "unscientific" theorists of the anti-semitic movement, did not claim that the Germans were of pure Nordic race, but trusted that they might be "nordicized" by selection and breeding.

Therefore they announced that in the coming Third Empire the population would be split into groups. Groups one and two were to receive State financial support for children; group three comprised persons whose offspring was unwished, and naturally included the Jews. In fact, these patriotic physicians prepared a special classification in which German-born Jews were a foreign race to be deprived of civil rights. A special bill for keeping the race pure forbade marriages between Germans and people of foreign race, and sexual intercourse between the two groups was to be punishable by prison for the Germans, hard labor for the racially foreign.

One heroic National-Socialist physician actually refused to take Jews as patients. And the Medical Faculty of Berlin University reserved the front seat at clinical demonstrations for Aryans (*Die Weltbühne*, July 12, 1932.)

That such conduct was not merely accidental was shiningly demonstrated by a volume that appeared in the summer of 1932, *Is the Jew Guilty?* (*Der Jud' ist schuld . . . ?*), in which numerous authors expressed

their views for or against the Jews. This book is a priceless example of the minds of German reactionary leaders and nothing short of complete reading could do it justice. But the following samples establish the intellectual and moral level:

Count Ernst zu Reventlow announced that "the Jew can only live and thrive among peoples by sponging." It appears that Jews were responsible for causing Chancellor Caprivi before the war to lower the tariffs on food stuffs and thereby threaten German agriculture with ruin. Jews with free trade principles actually dare preach internationalism, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the end of war! (Would you believe it?) Seemingly distinguished Jews like Einstein, Heine, Meyerbeer, Rubinstein, Bleichröder, Lasker, Marx and Lassalle were either destroyers or plagiarizers of German minds. After all, "Einstein's work is recognized only in the Jewish press" (!)

Ernst von Wolzogen and Ottokar Stauff von der March expressed the conviction that Jesus could have been no full-blooded Hebrew. The second had been informed that the Jews are opposed to the Aryans, "above all, to the most ideal branch of Aryans, the Teutons, and to their heirs, the Germans."

Arthur Dinter, a fantastic writer of considerable power, announced that "all human beings without exception are incarnate spirits." Even the Jews therefore. But wait: "In the highest human race, the Aryan, spirits of the highest capacity for knowledge incarnate" while "the majority of the Jews are incarnations of those selfish fallen spirits who in the primeval time of Divine Creation, through megalomania and

self-seeking brought about the apostasy of hosts of spirits." It is clear that, as Ferdinand Werner, the National-Socialist president of the Diet of Hessa, so aptly put it, "The history of the world cannot be understood without a knowledge of Jewish influence." And he gave a long list of the sorts of contemporary crime in which Jews are the organizers, quite as they brought about the apostasy of "hosts of spirits."

And so it went on for several hundred pages.

The elimination of Jews from German public life (if not from Germany altogether) was one of the chief promises of National-Socialist propagandists and apparently rarely failed to elicit approval. Gregor Strasser promised (October 31, 1931) that the National-Socialists would put an end to Jewry in Germany. Pastor Peperkorn told the Prussian Diet that the Jews must get out. Deputy Kube announced to the same august body (June 2, 1932) that "when we clean house, the Exodus of the Children of Israel will be a child's game in comparison." The so called Boxheimer documents seized by the police on National-Socialists announced the preparation of obligatory service for all but Jews, and food only for those who served. Clearly, the Jews were to starve.

The important National-Socialist, Captain Hermann Goering, gave an interview to an Italian newspaper in which he explained that while only those Jews who had in any way injured the German State would "be punished," those who entered Germany after August, 1914, were to be shown the door and all remaining Jews, irrespective of origin, to be turned out of responsible positions in the press, in the theater, in moving pictures, in the schools and universities, as

well as from every official position, honor or position from which they may conceivably exert "their decomposing, anti-national, international or at best non-national influence to the detriment of the German people." While in the words of deputy Bauer of the Prussian Diet, "The Third Empire will treat Jews like plant lice."

As a result of such encouragement, young fanatics and rowdies for a considerable period made a practice of defiling and desecrating Jewish cemeteries and synagogues—in all, 109 of them up to the summer of 1932—and announced that more synagogues would soon burn. The house and shop windows of Jews were repeatedly broken. Nationalist heroes, more or less directed, swept along Kurfürstendamm in Berlin on Jewish Easter, 1932 and, twenty to one, attacked persons whom they suspected of Semitic blood. They were young lads, and racially inexperienced. A Hindu and a Frenchman, both of whom I know personally, were surrounded. The Hindu was knocked down and his nose broken, the Frenchman saved himself only by a volley of Gallic curses which betrayed his origin.

A Jewish organization published a long list of attacks on isolated Jews. In Pustutten, men of the Third Empire set dogs on a Jewish merchant. Smearing Jewish walls with taunts, obscenities and swastika symbols had become the pastime of thousands of children. In many schools Jewish children were enduring hell at the hands of their merciless Christian companions. Many a small merchant was hounded from the small town where his family had lived for generations, by unceasing boycott and persecution. At one moment the Nationalist students at the Univer-

sity of Berlin coolly demanded the dismissal of all Hebrew students.

And the courts? Surely all decent Germans protested against such villainy and severely punished the offenders?

They did not.

The German magistrates decided that "Jew" as a taunt was no cause for resentment and that the democratic State might be called "Jew Republic" with impunity by any that so desired. A gentleman who called the Berlin Police President a "Jewish bastard" was acquitted. A great many of those who desecrated Jewish cemeteries and synagogues got off free or with the mildest of sentences. No wonder that in the summer of 1932 a number of prominent Jews wrote a letter to the German Chancellor asking if the Government had the intention of giving its Jewish citizens the protection that they had a right to expect. An official answered, promising protection, but requesting that his answer be kept secret!

The police authorities persuaded the Association of Jewish Boy Scouts (*Jüdischer Pfadfinderbund Deutschlands*) to give up the idea of an open-air camp (summer of 1932) because they could not guarantee the personal safety of the campers against the attacks of racial rowdies. A pretty index of a situation.

The various published appeals for the boycott of Jewish shops, Jewish physicians, Jewish lawyers, proved clearly that this Aryan propaganda was not entirely disinterested. It is difficult to imagine that the leaders believed a tenth of what they said, still less to gauge how much of their threats they would have put

into effect had they had a chance. A suspicion arises that Adolf Hitler himself accepted anti-semitism with his characteristic mixture of emotionalism and political cunning. Many doubted if he really desired pogroms.

At first too the masses could hardly have swallowed the attempt to make of the "Jid" shopkeeper they had known all their life a drinker of Christian blood. But with the increase of poverty and unemployment, assertions at first accepted as jokes, began to stick. Germany became a yeast-bed of racial hatred.

What could the Jews do? It had all happened often enough before, every detail, every lie. For more than two thousand years. It would not change for anything they did. Anti-semitism is an Aryan, not a Jewish problem.

When the Jews in Germany were taunted with their Jewish national feeling, they became German patriots and roared with the rest in 1914. Yet Germany was a country which by the Delbrück Act specifically allowed its natives to take on a second nationality without losing their right to be German. What hypocrisy was here?

Then the Jews were accused of keeping socially apart, and in answer they sought assimilation. Only to be told that the Germans did not accept mixture with their inferior blood. Then they were reproached with their religion, but most of them had lost their religion. Half of them were by history and habit more German than the bulk of the population east of the River Elbe and, what is more, they had contributed considerably more to German culture.

What could the Jews do?

In point of fact the Jews in Germany were slowly disappearing. Their birth-rate was lower than that of the rest of the population. They were being steadily assimilated. For every hundred marriages between two full-blooded Jews (1928) there were over fifty between Jew and Aryan. The expert, E. Kahn, calculated (*Der Internationale Geburtenstreik*) that if matters continued as when he wrote, by 1970 the number of Jews in Germany would be reduced from 564,000 (in 1925) to 264,000. Furthermore, as Werner Sombart first noticed, the more economic activity becomes collective, in trust and monopoly, (to say nothing of State capitalism or Communism) the less the individualistic Jew manages to hold his place in the front rank.

Yet such facts counted for nothing with the ignorant, the fanatic and the insincere. The aim of their barbarous campaign was the extermination, permanent subjection or voluntary departure of the Jews from Germany. Already Professor S. Passarge had announced (*Der Jud' ist schuld . . . ?*) that the "time is not distant when Ahasverus, the eternal Jew, will start again on his restless wanderings, in degradation and poverty." All in all, it might have been well for his persecutors to remember that possibly the Jews could get along better without the Germans than the Germans without the Jews.

Those who know the details may calculate the size of the hole in German music, art, science, learning, legal life, business, banking, society and general civilization that was to be created by that new Exodus of the People of Israel which Kube promised. And when he blustered that "a people that possess a

Kant will not permit an Einstein to be talked on to it," human wisdom whispered that a people that refused an Einstein would be unworthy of a Kant.

In attacking the Jews, a large number of Germans were, in fact, giving rein to that senseless self-destruction in which they as people always excelled. Like the "violent against themselves" whom Dante found in the inferno repenting their suicide in the shape of bleeding plants and trees, the Jew-baiters in Germany seemed headed for an unhappy future. For the Jews learned long ago that in the long run God is *not* on the side of the strongest battalions.

Why were honest Germans thus misled? Because they were taught to worship force, grew great by war, organized for war and lost the greatest of all wars.

Because of all great peoples they were still the least formed, harmonious and self-assured: their feeling of inferiority sought constant confirmation of a transcendent inherent value that alone could justify hope in their national mission.

Since they had lost the war, since they were poor and weary and bewildered, since they had been taught to believe themselves a wronged and humiliated nation, the question inevitably arose, how could such a situation come to be? No people likes to admit its own failings. Where, therefore, could the responsibility be put, if not on the Jew in their midst, the hateful foreign body in the otherwise flawless German organism?

In short, the suffering German hated the Jew rather than see himself as he was.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LEADER

"It is *my* ideal that has today become your ideal . . . these are *my* storm battalions, *my* badges and *my* flag."

From a proclamation of ADOLF HITLER.

"All that I say and do is history."

ADOLF HITLER.

"As Christ in his twelve disciples raised a stock faithful unto martyrdom, whose belief shattered the great Roman Empire, so in Germany today, we are experiencing the same thing . . . Adolf Hitler . . . is the true Holy Ghost."

HANS KERRL.

AGED forty-three, he stood on the threshold of Power. A private theatrical seemed condensing into intoxicating reality. By the Spring of 1932, Adolf Hitler, former corporal of the List Regiment, Royal Bavarian Infantry, could conceivably become Dictator of the Germans, another Mussolini, the peer of Stalin, Pilsudski and Kemal Pasha. A corporal and a "little man." What a coincidence! Combine the two and you get "little corporal" . . . Bonaparte at Lodi! Bismarck? Already overshadowed. Say rather Frederick the Great, Cromwell, Cæsar. . . . Adolf Hitler from Braunau on the Inn, to go down the centuries in such thunderous company! The house-painter's mate, the concrete mixer, the orderly, the "drummer" of the Third Empire that is not on land or sea, to

become a master of history! What could prevent it? He peered into his looking-glass:

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
Who is the greatest of us all?”

An unconvincing figure in black suit, white shirt and inevitable raincoat. An unconvincing face, with impertinent nose, dark hair and Charlie Chaplin dab on the upper lip; with the anything but aristocratic head, and eyes that pleaded for sympathy. In appearance utterly commonplace, this was the most effective orator in Germany and the hardest working politician in Europe. A man who in thirteen short years *talked* into being such a movement as Germany never saw before. Who without loss of prestige, matched weapons in popular election with no less an adversary than the great Hindenburg. Who was recognized by millions and millions as LEADER.

An insignificant figure, but a most unusual human being. Unlimited “over-compensation” triumphing over innate mediocrity. An actor whose entire career had played before an inner audience. A romantic patriot and war-partisan acknowledging the rights of no people but his own. An insatiable ego striving night and day to believe that it alone was the umbilical cord linking the contemporary world to its unborn destiny. The “last hope” of the “lost generation” of disinherited German youth. The epitome of reaction masquerading in revolutionary bonnet.

What an amazing life! Thanks to the insatiable Narcissus-craving that made him begin his autobiography, *My Struggle*, at the unusual age of thirty-five, the major facts are common property.

Adolf Hitler was born in 1889 at Braunau in Upper Austria, just across the Inn River from Germany. Watching Germany was his father's job: Hitler *père* was a minor customs official. More than middle-aged when Adolf was born. Apparently a stern but just man who wished his only son to become an official and a copy of himself. Judged by her photograph, his mother seems a gentle person, with a touch of small-town "genius."

Little Adolf learned easily, had a glib tongue, and came to be a ring-leader among the boys. A mass photo shows him as both stubborn and impertinent—and very much a show-off. He attended the intermediate school at Linz and at the age of eleven announced his desire to become an artist, much to his father's disgust. Both sides stood their ground.

As a pupil the boy was most interested in geography and world history. At an early age he came under the influence of a history professor, Ludwig Pötsch, who made him into a fanatical patriot—not for Austria, but for Germany! For by the mature age of twelve he had, so he wrote, come to "understand the meaning of history."

His early drawings show a real though unobtrusive artistic talent. At about the same time, an enthusiasm for Lohengrin is recorded. His later life demonstrated how deep an impression that Wagnerian melodrama must have left upon the histrionic boy. In the little town of Lambach, whither his father retired, he sang in the Catholic church choir, succumbed to the rich ceremonial and considered becoming an abbot.

A few years passed, then came disaster. Both parents died. At the age of seventeen, young Adolf started out for Vienna with a roll of drawings and

fifty crowns (about ten dollars) in his pocket, to become a painter of pictures.

At the *Akademie* he presented his drawings—and was refused! The drawings were not bad, the professor said, but they indicated a talent for architecture. Adolf had not even finished school. What chance had he of becoming an architect? Yet he stubbornly determined he would do so. Meanwhile he had to earn his living, so he—the son of an official!—was compelled to accept odd jobs as a manual laborer in the building trades—a blow that he could never quite forget.

Life in abject poverty among common workmen would in any case have been bad enough. Life among the Viennese workmen was acute suffering to him. These fellows expected him, the embryo architect, to join a trade union—as though he intended to remain a laborer! When he refused, they turned nasty, made jokes about pushing him off the scaffolding on which they were occupied, boycotted him and sometimes refused to work with such a scab at all. He tried to argue with them and was horrified. For the romantic patriotism against which he played out his day dreams of personal heroism, these class-conscious proletarians had nothing but jeers. These Viennese vulgarians mocked at their people's greatness and polluted its history. "Are these human beings, are they worthy to belong to a great people?" he asked himself. For their viewpoint he had not the slightest comprehension. Had he not already learned the meaning of history from Professor Pötsch? It never occurred to him that their interpretation of events might be as correct as his. They professed repulsively human ethics,

hooted at heroic personality, put mere numbers in the place of leadership. Their trade unions were simply instruments of terror against natural inequality. It was all un-German.

Indignantly he refused to join the union, though it meant less employment.

Regular observation of the Austrian Parliament, the *Reichsrat*, further confirmed most of his doubts: Austria-Hungary, the political unit into which he had been born, was not a genuine German state. Within it, the foreign majority was allowed to raise its voice, even to modify policy. The Hapsburg Monarchy was, in last analysis, nothing but a rotten mosaic of mostly inferior peoples. After two years of indignant observation, the young concrete mixer and house-painter, who "had always hated the Parliament," simply refused to recognize it any more! His romantic eyes saw through the swindle of popular government with the same ease with which his mind had penetrated the meaning of world history. Belief in majority rule, he came to see, demolishes the sublime idea of LEADERSHIP. Against numerical democracy, he already pitted "German democracy," or the right of a people to choose their dictator. "The front way into the Pantheon of history is not for sneaks but for heroes," he later wrote.

Vienna, whose charming Barocco architecture had at first delighted his very real sense for form, became a severe trial to his hysterically patriotic soul. He read a great deal: all his life he had been in awe of culture. But as he explains, he read selectively, accepting only what he could fit into his dream of personal distinction. Despite this intellectual effort, the real causes of

contemporary society's degradation might have remained forever dark to him, had it not been for the influence of two of his contemporaries, Baron Georg von Schönerer who taught him to gauge the rottenness of the Hapsburg State, and the Mayor of the City, Karl Lueger. For Lueger's tirades directed his attention to the Jew. This mayor was, to be sure, an anti-semite who cultivated Jews intensively in private. But young Hitler in his cellar bedroom knew nothing of Lueger's Semitic friends. He heard only the anti-semitic public speeches—and the scales fell from his eyes.

Only the understanding of Israel offered the clue to contemporary society. In Linz he had occasionally seen Jews, but their exterior had already been "humanized." In Vienna he first saw East European Jews with sticky cheek locks and kaftans. Were these human beings? the Aryan from Braunau asked himself. Human or not, he found on investigation that these un-German creatures filled the press, the literature, the art, the music, the theater, the science of Vienna. This explained matters. It must be owing to the Jews that so many Viennese had learned to admire such a degraded country as France. Under Jewish influence, the Viennese newspapers dared attack Kaiser Wilhelm, whom Hitler admired as the creator of the German Navy. Jews were the city's whoremasters, Jews the labor leaders, Jewish the critical spirit that dried up the fountains of heroic tradition! By what right had these crooked-legged, flat-footed, un-Nordic creatures anything to say in an Empire conquered by German chivalry? Actually they had secured a kind of leadership.

Through misleading the workmen, of course. This was the secret of all that he hated. This was why the frivolous Viennese could laugh at Hitler's Bavarian dialect, his provincial ways. The workmen must not be hated, they must be pardoned (all the same, he continued to hate them). Vienna, that beautiful city, was in last analysis, a giant incarnation of racial shame. Hitler became an anti-Semite. "In so far as I defend myself against the Jews, I am doing the Lord's work" (*My Struggle*).

After five unhappy years, the young man left Vienna. Architecture had had to be abandoned, but he was again determined to become a painter of pictures. In these years, he had, so he writes, acquired a view of facts and a philosophy of life as the granite foundations of his future behavior. What had he learned? To hate workmen and loathe socialism and despise Jews as the enemies of the Aryan race, the German people and the aristocratic principle in nature. Not the preservation of any particular state or government is the highest human purpose, but the protection of the biological species, the blood. The struggle for existence will break all the "ridiculous fetters of so-called human feeling," which feeling is "a mixture of stupidity, cowardice and learned conceit." No softness here: "Mankind has become great in everlasting struggle—in everlasting peace it would decay." No doubt about it: from this time on young Hitler felt qualified to express his opinions—even when lacking in originality—about almost everything. Later in life he found little worth adding and nothing to change in the opinions he already possessed.

In the Spring of 1912 this unwitting Darwinist

came to live in Munich—a German city! How wildly his heart beat!

For two years more he lived as a poor Bohemian artist, dreaming of artistic success, talking politics of the sort acquired in Vienna, and waiting for glory. Why had he not been born a hundred years earlier at the time of the struggle against Napoleon, when a man who knew nothing of business could still be somebody?

When war finally came, he sank on his knees and thanked God. A photograph shows him in the crowd that raged through the Munich streets, on his face an expression of blank beatitude. Here was the chance he had been waiting for.

He enlisted. He spent four years on the western front. He forced his unsteady nerves into heroic stoicism. As a soldier he was a distinct success. He became a battle orderly, a corporal—was decorated and twice wounded. With supreme determination he dramatized himself into the solitary, misunderstood patriot. Deliberately he distanced himself from his comrades. He refused their offer of food from home since he could not return it. He eschewed women. He sought danger and never shrank from exposing his life. National enthusiasm became to him an autographed version of some glorious past he had dreamed about. He strove to keep it white-hot. The war “was the most unforgettable and greatest time of his moral life.” The Army became his home, the first he had known since his parents’ death.

Nonetheless his effort turned out to be useless. The German collapse found him still nothing but a corporal just recovering from a gas attack in a hospital

near Berlin. He almost lost his sight. Yet when he learned of the defeat and the proclamation of the Republic he wept—so he says—for the first time since he had stood by the grave of his mother. Because of the defeat? or the Republic? or his failure to emerge from the insignificance that was intolerable to him? Later his tear glands became more active: in the course of a single interview with Otto Strasser he wept no less than three times.

When Hitler left the hospital—according to his autobiography—he swore to become a politician. His aims were to eliminate Marxist socialism, to restore autocracy in Germany and to conquer the international Jew—no more, no less. The incurable self-dramatizer changed the war play for a new one but did not dream of creating anyone but himself for the hero's part.

He returned to Munich and after a little joined an anti-revolutionary group. But he did not attempt to oppose the Bavarian Bolsheviks actively until their brief reign was over. Then he joined a small group of six humble individuals like himself who had formed a "German Labor Party"—much to his own surprise, for he had intended to found his own party. Soon he became the leader of the group—seven against the Republic! From an engineer, Gottfried Feder, who had invented a mysterious formula for breaking the "bondage of interest" (*Zinsknechtschaft*) Hitler received the economic doctrine he needed. But his real teacher in this period was a strange drunken genius, Dietrich Eckart. This elderly writer was the translator of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and the author of a play, *Lorenzaccio*, but his real gift was for brilliant conversation.

When stimulated by alcohol or morphine he could talk with the depth and subtlety of a sage: yet, like so many of the Munich group, he had one soft spot in his brain, the Jews. Concerning Germany and concerning the Jews Eckart neither was nor desired to be objective, for he adored the first and detested the second. Many young men flocked about him, thrilled by his monologues. Of them all, none was more faithful than Adolf Hitler. Eckart sometimes complained of the thick skull of his disciple, but dog-like fidelity is sweet, especially to a ruined life. Into Hitler the older man poured his philosophy and some of it, at least, remained in the Austrian's brain. This man was the real inspirer of Adolf Hitler.

The Social-Democrats and the Versailles Treaty provided what other material Hitler needed for his politics. After all, had he not brought a complete philosophy of life with him from Vienna? Adolf Hitler began to speak in public.

What did he tell the weary population whose wounded feelings longed for nothing but assuagement? He spoke of biology and high politics, compared the Treaty of Versailles unfavorably with that of Brest-Litovsk, examined war origins and concluded that the German defeat was the "merited chastisement of eternal retribution." Yet it was not altogether their fault. The true Germany had been polluted by Jews and Socialists! "The sin against blood and race is the original sin of this world." What did the German people owe the old Army? Everything. Men babble Jewish nonsense about overcoming nature. But nature cannot be overcome. The Aryan is the original type of what we call mankind. The Negro is a half-

ape! Cultures perish through bad blood mixtures. Poison can only be "broken" (!) through counter-poison. None of this was in any sense new but he brought temperament and novel expression. And so on. And he found that it went. He was a born orator for mobs. Even hostile audiences fell under his influence after an hour or two of this sort of stuff. In fact, he soon became the most effective speaker in Germany. And set about "drumming" Germany awake.

Did he believe all that he said? The question is inapplicable to this sort of personality. Subjectively Adolf Hitler was, in my opinion, entirely sincere even in his self-contradictions, for his is a humorless mind that simply excludes the need for consistency that might distress more intellectual types. To an actor the truth of anything lies in its effect: if it makes the right impression it is true. I believe it was Diderot who in the *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* first noted the double personality of the player—how one half must feel and act, the other half observe and criticize. Adolf Hitler was a natural comedian.

He and his party issued a helter-skelter program of twenty-five points and began to organize. Members collected rapidly. Soon there were thousands. Hitler's oratorical fame brought him in touch with the great of the earth, with the Bavarian leader, Gustav von Kahr, who had made the little country into "a cell of order" where all the North German rebels against "red Berlin" were welcome. Hitler met Ludendorff, who had come to Bavaria after he "happened by accident" to have met the Kapp rebels at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. He found financial backers. He

consorted with his "social betters" on equal terms. He gave lectures on everything. Toward the end of 1923 his name was well known and he found himself a prominent figure in the Bavarian uprising.

What happened belongs to history. At the last moment, after long conspiracy against the Republic, the Bavarians, in common with the North German leaders decided to accept the French terms, stabilize the mark and restore order. Hitler with Ludendorff naïvely went on with the planned *Putsch* without the military backing that alone promised success. Hitler began by firing a revolver into the ceiling of a packed room in a Munich brewery and ended by throwing himself so hard upon the stones of a Munich street to dodge the bullets from a *Reichswehr* machine-gun that he broke his shoulder. Ludendorff did not dodge. Lord d'Abernon wrote: "Hitler's courage was unequal to the occasion." This was a mistake. Hitler's courage would have been equal to anything if only he had had warning enough to enable his dramatized heroic self to surmount his normal ego. This man, I maintain, had the stuff of the martyrs in him. From a law court that was frightened lest the conspirator reveal the full complicity of the Bavarian leaders, he received a mild sentence of five years in the fortress, of which he served only some eight months.

It was before the Munich judges that I first saw him—and marveled. Was this provincial dandy, with his slick dark hair, his cutaway coat, his awkward gestures and glib tongue, the terrible rebel? He seemed for all the world like a traveling salesman for a clothing firm.

In the fort at Landsberg-on-the-Leck he wrote his autobiography: *My Struggle*. Thereby he established his financial independence, laid down his fundamental ideas—and gave to the future an invaluable clue to his histrionic personality.

Hitler can not write. He makes speeches. He does not think. He gropes about until his mind hits a well-worn word-path and slides into an oration. His so-called ideas are canned formulæ that hide wishes. They merely decorate his totally subjective ego. What he does know—how to lead men and women by the nose—is a matter of instinct. His book was written to strengthen his own belief in his mission. In the Vienna days, he wanted to be an architect; during the war, an officer; during the wild years in Munich before the insurrection, the “drummer” of awakening Germany who was only too pleased to march beside General Erich Ludendorff. In the fortress his ambition grew. When he left it was with the intention of becoming founder, organizer, oracle, leader and ultimate beneficiary of a movement that could, he felt, be grounded in human gullibility. “The German,” he wrote naïvely in *My Struggle* (deleted from the twelfth edition, 1932) “has not the slightest notion how a people must be misled if the adherence of the masses is sought.”

A little man had taken the measure of still smaller men. Before him was the great example of Mussolini. More than anyone else he recognized how limitless had remained the desire of the German to obey! But by seeking power through the despised masses he condemned himself to strict legality. From the time he left the fortress he was no longer a revolutionary—

if he ever had been. The National-Socialist party was languishing; he revived it almost immediately. At his first meeting in the Krone Circus in Munich, he charged a mark entrance fee: eight thousand persons crowded into an auditorium built to hold six thousand. Under the influence of the Strasser brothers, Gregor and Otto, and a young man named Joseph Goebbels, the movement was becoming truly socialistic in tone and aim. Hitler loathed real socialism in any form. His inherent conservatism made him the born ally and tool of German pseudo-capitalists in their war on labor organizations. Thanks in part to the unexpected assistance of that same Joseph Goebbels, in 1926 he actually succeeded in having the program of 1920 declared unalterable. Thereafter all decisions were taken by Hitler alone. He was the party pope.

For some years progress—despite a brave show of confidence—was disappointingly slow.

Until technological unemployment began to show. From 1927 on, despite the apparent prosperity, unemployment among educated young people steadily increased. They provided the kernel of what people often called the “lost generation,” the youth who found no place in the economic world into which they were untimely born. The ex-soldiers, the students, the enraged patriots and former beneficiaries of privilege would not, of themselves, have been numerous enough to constitute a major party. But reinforced by the ripening millions of the “lost generation,” the growth of the party became prodigious, especially when it began to be literally sustained by industry. After the death of Stresemann, the Govern-

ment perhaps deliberately aided its progress by accepting Hitler's arguments against the war treaties as its own. And then came the world depression that made it really important.

The depression brought the voters in carloads to Hitler, the wonder-man of Munich, who most loudly condemned the Dawes and Young Plans, the Treaty Fulfillment policy and the payment of reparations. Somehow they too began to feel that "in this man's mortal frame the Original Germanic Nature is incarnate." (Georg Schott, *Das Volksbuch vom Hitler*). The more they believed, the harder Hitler worked. He and his assistants began to smell dinner. At the *Reichstag* election of September, 1930, his party gained a hundred and seven seats and with one swoop became the second largest in the country. From that moment it was clear that unless the economic depression passed quickly, either Hitler must be tamed, or Hitler might one day rule. For two years ex-Chancellor Heinrich Brüning sought unsuccessfully to tame him, for Hitler's appetite grew with success.

The German people were sick of everything. Social experiment had not brought prosperity. Treaty Fulfillment had not led to national recovery. Russian Bolshevism was not attractive. War was still impossible. Yet the miserable present simply could not go on.

The only way still apparently open led to the past and its prophet was Adolf Hitler, who called it the future. Therefore with a savage frenzy the millions rushed into the arms of the eloquent man they had come to consider a last hope—the LEADER toward a Third Empire of apocalyptic expectancy.

CHAPTER XX

A SHOWMAN OF GENIUS

"Why does a limited and almost absurd appearing individual succeed in an undertaking that sensible people considered unfeasible?"

HANS PRINZHORN.

ANYWHERE in Germany, anytime between 1928 and 1932.

The biggest hall in town, packed with people. Many of them under twenty-five. Just below the roof hang enormous flags: a plain red ground with a round white center and on this in bold black, a swastika or hooked cross. Across one end of the hall, in letters large enough to be read a quarter of a mile, the ritual greeting: "Germany awake!" Near the entrances, around the walls and banked heavily near the empty speaker's podium, stand sturdy youths in mustard-colored shirts, leather leggings and semi-military caps. For this is a political meeting of the National-Socialist German Labor Party, a party preaching political violence. In any case, these healthy young men with their brawny shoulders and bold faces are indicative of strength and a future.

A great many of those present have paid for the privilege of coming—anything from five cents to five dollars, according to their means and accommodation. Yet the meeting is packed. It is always packed. It

must be packed. It would be packed if the party had to pay people to enter. For a packed hall suggests success. But such payment is not necessary. For tonight Adolf Hitler, the LEADER, is speaking in person.

It is late. National-Socialist meetings almost always begin a little late. It gives them greater importance. Suddenly, military bands break into action, one to four of them, twenty to two hundred instruments with plenty of trombones and reinforced drums—a military march. The doors furthest from the podium open and the party standards appear. They are large and gilded. Above a banner is a circle enclosing a swastika in bronze and on the top perches a bronze eagle. In close formation, with studied solemnity, the standard bearers move forward and group themselves about the foot of the podium. As they pass through the crowd a group of party members, a well-trained clique, under the guidance of an invisible cheer leader, break into a vast shout: “Hail! Hail! Hail!” It is contagious. Most of the crowd are in on the third hail. Then, at the rear, behind a bodyguard of stiff-moving, extra-stalwart lads, a small group, generally in the traditional brown uniform, the prominent leaders, for all the world like a general’s staff. And last, behind them, smiling as benignly as a victorious general reviewing his army, the LEADER, Adolf Hitler. No uniform. No airs here. Just like one of the crowd. A regular fellow! Pale tan raincoat, black shoes and socks, black suit and tie, white shirt, gold party pin in the lapel, slick dark hair and dark “Chaplins” on the upper lip reflecting the severity of the costume.

Once more the audience breaks into shouts: "*Ave Caesar Imperator!*"

No, that is not what they are shouting, but it might be. They are expressing their loyalty, their devotion, their faith unto death to the LEADER who is about to save Germany! (Really he is asking them for their votes and support—but you would never know it. By making them pay to enter, by his stage craft and decorations and mass suggestion, the impression is actually created that it is they who are appealing to him. So far as I know, aside from a few successful revivalists, no one else in the contemporary world can do this.)

Once, just after the coronation of Pope Pius in Rome, probably the most colorful ceremony in Christendom, I asked an American cardinal of Irish extraction for his comment.

"Well, my boy, it was a grand show, a grand show. But just between us, Ziegfeld would have done it better!"

Not Ziegfeld of Follies Fame, not Max Reinhardt himself, could have staged Adolf Hitler's political meetings better than Hitler. In this field he is, so far as I know, unequaled.

Silence is restored. The LEADER and his companions and his bodyguard have reached the podium. They are seated. One of the lesser lights arises to do the introducing. A lesser light, but a competent speaker. He begins in a friendly, matter-of-fact way, to address the crowd. He takes it for granted that they all agree with him. His purpose is not to win votes (oh no!) but to inform them, the mass, whither the

guides are leading them and how lucky they are to possess such guides.

It is highly studied stuff, but it sounds entirely casual. He takes them into his confidence, he shares political jokes with them, all for perhaps five minutes. Then suddenly, growing pathetic, he dwells upon their woes. They, their families, their fatherland, all are in danger. Everything is for the worst in the worst of all countries. But it is not their fault, not the fault of this grandest of all peoples. Suddenly he grows savage and turns to them with a question:

"What is responsible for our misery?"

Five hundred instructed party members, reply in unison: "The System!" (meaning the democratic Republic).

"Who is behind the System?"

"The Jews!"

It is like a catechism. And then:

"What is Adolf Hitler to us?"

"A faith!"

"What else?"

"A last hope!"

"What else?"

"Our LEADER."

Military bands crash a gigantic salute. Then the LEADER arises, stands silent for an impressive moment, and speaks. In a rough but powerful voice. One hour. Two hours. Four hours. The crowd hangs on his words. They have ceased to be beings with minds, they have become a single sounding-board for this man's music! If he stops, they howl for more. He states the most astonishing and totally inaccurate

things. He roars, he pleads; if need be, he can weep, but he never analyzes, discusses or argues. He affirms, attacks, comforts. According to his axiom of aiming at the lowest in his audience, he keeps to the vaguest generalities and formulae, repeating them with infinite verve. At the same time he appeals to the personality of each class of hearer, of each hearer in person:

“Discussion of our program is useless, my friends: each of you already knows in his heart just what we shall do when we get into power!”

What balm to a miserable people that does nothing but murmur: “Something has to happen!” He alone promises that something will happen. How? Somewhat as follows:

First, the National-Socialists must come to power alone and smash the existing *System* (nothing can be expected of them so long as their power is not absolute). *Then only* can they clear up the terrible ravages left by criminal and incapable Republicans. And *finally* (but without undue hurry) the foundations will be laid for a society in which *everything will be different*—the Third Empire of the triumphant Germans!

In the meantime, he offers consolation to the miserable. “You,” he says to the half-educated, despairing, bankrupt middle-class auditors, “are indeed poor devils, without national independence or fortune, without social consideration or source of income, *but it is not your fault that you lost the war and the peace!* You have been betrayed. Your country was mutilated. Your legitimate claim to a greater territory for your many children is contested in the East

by lousy Poles; your industrial substance in the West is being eaten away by Jewish-ruled American financiers; your legitimate desire to rise in your might and sweep the vermin away awakens the brutality of your oppressors, the already semi-negroid people of militaristic France.

"Remember that you are the greatest people on earth, the finest representatives of that Aryan race that God Almighty intended should rule the earth. What should you do? Obey me absolutely. Follow me, and your day will come as surely as tomorrow's sun!"

Do they follow? They do. Sceptics turn as fervent as old-time partisans. "Like an illumination it comes over them that the divinity they are seeking lies in their people, hidden somewhere deep in their blood and their destiny. The twentieth-century man is seeking for a new myth." (*Zwischenspiel Hitler*). The audience is having a grand time. Down in the front row, adolescent girls sit tense, with the facial expression of those awaiting some supreme sensation. Young men feel their backs stiffen. Old people who have not smiled for months begin to glow. This is what they all needed to hear. Only Adolf Hitler is their comforter.

When he finally decides to let up on them and turns away to wipe the flowing sweat, and the bands burst out in a military apotheosis, they sing their patriotic songs as never before, and disband. To most of them, the advent of the Third Empire is as certain as their own emotional exhaustion.

So it went on, night after night, for years.

Within the thousands were perhaps a handful who did not rise to the occasion. They looked for persua-

sion and perceived only theatricals of a pretty cheap type. They wanted argument and were given rhetoric and preposterous mis-statement. They hoped for elevated oratory and heard only colloquial appeal. They expected to see a superior being and saw a man in physique perhaps worse than most of themselves—"face and head bad race, mongrel" (Professor von Gruber, M.D., President of the Bavarian Academy), a mediocre, awkward figure, apparently at home behind a provincial shop counter. What the few saw was objectively true—but what difference did that make if ninety-five percent of those present saw something different and sublime?

Without world economic depression, Adolf Hitler would have been less successful. In any democratic age he would have been able to play a considerable rôle, for the simple reason that he was perhaps the greatest contemporary master of mob psychology and in his party, propaganda occupies the chief place. William Hale Thompson, Chicago's cowboy mayor who kept his job for so long by attacking King George V of England and promising to burn the public libraries, was perhaps his only worthy forerunner in the field of the Higher Propaganda. But no one before him in Germany ever appealed to crowds in this manner. (His importance was demonstrated by the fact that in the *Reichstag* election of July, 1932, every other party copied his campaign methods, marching men in uniform, military music, flags, greetings, badges, catchwords—even to his whirlwind airplane trip through the country.)

If he had not become a political prophet, he might equally well have been a great preacher, a great actor,

a ring-master (his entire appearance suggests the circus), a magnificent producer of theatrical spectacles, or an unequaled advertising manager. There was something of William II about him, save only that Hitler, despite a mediocre appearance, stood head and shoulders above the former Emperor in the certainty of his dramatic appeal.

Machiavelli, Gustav Lebon and William James were his chief instructors (or might have been: perhaps he never read a line of them). From the Florentine he could have learned his political cynicism and worship of force, his contempt for men in mass. The crowd is a woman and must be dominated, brutalized, violated. In Gustav Lebon he could have read that men in a crowd are no longer *homines sapientes*, but a mob. And from William James he might have taken over the sublime confidence in the "will to believe" as opposed to facts or logic. He himself followed the James philosophy rigidly: all his beliefs were a matter of emotion, instinct, preference. "What people desire determines their hope and belief," he wrote in *My Struggle*. Thus equipped, he made it a point of telling his audience exactly what it wanted to hear, regardless of scruples. He was everything to everybody. To the rich, he and his followers promised low wages and high profits, to the poor, socialism and a national commonwealth. To the *Junkers*, protection of the big estates, and higher duties on grain: to the poor peasants, lower priced fertilizer and higher duties on imported vegetables and meat. To the hired farm hands, land and decent housing. To the unemployed he offered jobs. To unmarried women, husbands. To the political "outs," participation in power. Speaking to

the expropriated middle class, he attacked the Socialist workmen; to the workmen, the greedy capitalists. To all he promised a greater fatherland, no more reparations, national expansion with more territory, and a helpless, ever present, scape-goat for all their errors and mistakes and suffering in the form of the Jews!

Such general promises were with Hitler only a beginning. He collected and disseminated social and political resentments, fostered special hatreds, encouraged the violent suppression of adversaries, appealing one after the other to each of the more brutal human instincts.

Hitler knew his Germans. Other peoples dislike soldiers and drill: Germans hanker for both. So everything about National-Socialism was militarized. Other peoples resent open autocracy and desire at least the appearance of personal freedom. Germans seem obsessed by a desire to obey. Hitler so thoroughly fostered this feeling that you might hear National-Socialist students at Berlin University shouting in chorus: "We spit on freedom!" (*Wir scheissen auf die Freiheit!*)

Nothing that Adolf Hitler ever said or wrote is of weight except his numerous comments on political propaganda, which he strewed through his autobiography with amazing cynicism. They are both profound and valuable.

His party concentrated on symbols: The Roman greeting lifted from the Italian fascists; the uniforms, the "Aryan" swastika, armbands, pins, badges, flags, standards, music, songs, even poems. Hitler himself thought out many of them, particularly the party

flag. Its colors, black, white, red, were planned to echo the imperial banner; red stood for Socialism, white for Nationalism, and the black swastika for the supremacy of the Aryan race.

Nothing was left to chance. Never was a politician more contemptuous of the common people and never one studied them so carefully. His propagandists, instructed to the full in the effectiveness of catchwords, repeated a thousand times: Third Empire: Germany, awake!; Perish the Jew!; the System; treaty of shame; Germany's bondage; tribute; November criminals; dictatorship; national pride; spirit of the front; voice of the blood; fundamental instinct; nordicizing; stab in the back; un-German Marxism; red sub-humanity; red murder; party bonzes; ethics of pity; revenge; oppressors; hereditary enemy; heads will roll!

If even a single catch word began to go badly, it was canceled from the orators' vocabulary. When a poster failed to work, it disappeared overnight, although thousands had been pasted up throughout the country. Upon the restoration of the private army uniform, Hitler himself designed new and more lovely costumes for them. But no sooner had this fact been lampooned in an effective couplet by opponents than word went forth, the new uniforms must not be conspicuously worn.

Joseph Goebbels once told me how he spent three days thinking out two words for a new poster. Always the National-Socialist agitator was warned to appeal to the mass, and to the lowest in the mass, not through the intellect but through the emotions, the instincts. Be topical, be colloquial, was the advice given to speakers! Not the learned German war propaganda

and the manifesto of the ninety-three professors were effective. Proper were Lloyd George's and Wilson's slogans: Hang the Kaiser; make Germany pay; the war to end war; make the world safe for democracy. The mass, according to Hitler, is incapable of deciding any intellectual or moral question. It must be told. There is no need to be fair or respectful of an opponent's standpoint in politics. You do not expect a soap manufacturer to extol the product of his rivals. Simple people want simple unqualified answers to their questions: yes or no, right or wrong, patriot or traitor, German or foreign. No need to be too careful of truth: maligning an opponent is as justified as breaking up his meetings or beating him half to death. The aim of politics is power and power is for the taking.

Therefore the importance of the offensive. The National-Socialist, whether speaker, writer or street rowdy, had always to attack: "Your weapon is attack, never defense! Never let the enemy rest a moment!" (Joseph Goebbels: *Ten Commandments for the Election*). Everywhere, under all circumstances, the party must be experienced as power.

The prestige of the leaders was built up in a thousand ways: military bodyguard, salute by the bodyguard (who salutes a common individual?), legends deliberately spread by the newspapers. A special book of photographs showing the LEADER in every conceivable situation from the age of one onward, bears the effective title: "Hitler as None Know Him," thus allowing the common man to penetrate the intimate life of his chief.

Leaders were expected to believe in victory and in-

culcate belief wherever they went. Half the success of the movement seems to have been due to the impression that its success was absolutely inevitable. Blind discipline was enforced at meetings, and disturbers were ruthlessly ejected. Even mere interruptions had to be punished—this avoided discussion. Most men, according to Hitler, are courageous only in the mass. Their cowardice can be exploited. National-Socialist meetings were always held in the evening when tired nerves offered less resistance to mass suggestion.

Music was much used. Hitler was raised a Catholic and never quite forgot his early impressions of music, ritual and half light.

Being at bottom a Romantic of a peculiarly Wagnerian sort, the National-Socialist inevitably over-did symbolism. This exaggeration was apparent in the "brown houses" the party headquarters throughout Germany. The one at Munich was the model for the others and after purchase it was remodeled by an architect under the direction of the LEADER himself.

45, Brienner Strasse, is in a fashionable quarter of Munich, opposite the home of one of Hitler's most dangerous opponents, the Papal Nuntius. A mansion, bronze party standards before the door, a good deal of bronze inside—tablets in memory of the victims of the Beer Insurrection of 1923, Hitler's study, a simple room, with a picture of Frederick the Great and a bust of Mussolini. Only one over-powering room, the *Hall of the Senate*, the embodiment of party ambition. Paneled in curly walnut with a coffered ceiling, benches upholstered in bright red leather awaiting the forty-two senators of the apoca-

lyptic Third Empire. Above the LEADER'S seat a mosaic representing a golden eagle on a bright red ground with important dates in the party history. Aside from this red and gold and the abuse of the swastika in decoration, nothing objectionable in the building. Hitler was something of an artist, with a respectable though distinctly Wagnerian taste.

Yet the most important part of the house was the cellar. For here—at the time of my visit in 1932—was a card index containing the names of the million-odd party members. These were the real monument to the unrivaled energy with which Hitler and his followers year after year, against a thousand difficulties, persevered in their propaganda. Methods are important, but no amount of propaganda could have made the National-Socialist German Labor Party the biggest in Germany had it not been for the untiring activities of the leaders. Where others slept they labored. Where opponents talked once, they talked ten times. Hitler believed chiefly in the personal contact, the spoken word, personality.

In the great game of fooling the public he was an incomparable master.

CHAPTER XXI

HITLER AS ORGANIZER

"There is no National-Socialism without or against Hitler."
JOSEPH GOEBBELS.

THE National-Socialist German Labor Party was at its epoch the most imposing in Germany. In all Europe, perhaps in the entire world, its magnitude as a political instrument was overshadowed only by the Communist Party in Soviet Russia and by the Fascists in Italy. Its rise to the threshold of political power in the course of a few years had something fantastic about it. A table illustrates this better than words. The party possessed in

1919	7 members	
(Adolf Hitler was No. 7)		
1920	3,000	"
1925	27,000	"
1926	49,000	"
1927	72,000	"
1928	108,000	"
1929	178,000	"
1930	389,000	"
1931 (Dec.)	862,000	"
1932 (Jan.)	920,000	"

(All figures from the *Voelkischer Beobachter* special number March 23, 1932.)

Except for the outspoken labor parties, the Communists and the Social-Democrats, no other parties in Germany had any considerable membership at all. They consisted of a skeleton organization, a general staff of politicians and a press. Adolf Hitler began by copying the organization that had brought the Social-Democrats such phenomenal results in pre-war days. He uttered the principle that "terror can only be broken by terror," which meant that mass organization could only be met by mass organization. The example and success of the Fascists in Italy gave him a hint or two and the organization of the old Imperial Army a certain model. His results outstripped the most sanguine expectations.

During his involuntary sojourn in the fortress of Landsberg-on-the-Leck, Adolf Hitler transformed a hysterical political movement into a revivalist religion and a kind of modern crusade. This metamorphosis of a deep-lying itch for power into a full fledged "philosophy" was also copied from the Russians, the Italians and the pre-war German Socialists. Moreover it corresponded to that need for vast mental construction under which most Germans like to disguise their appetites and instincts. Against the "Marxist" view of life based on a materialist "dialectic" Hitler pitted a National-Socialist (lower middle class) "philosophy" based on "racial biology" and the denial of reason.

Such a philosophy demanded as adequate organization something that touched the life of the individual National-Socialist at as many conceivable points as possible—answering not only his questions about politics but regulating history, metaphysics, die-

tetics and hygiene. The party as conceived and realized was a very fair attempt to give adequate expression to such a philosophy.

What about the organization? I reach for the National-Socialist Youth Calendar for 1932, and after noting in passing that the birthdays of only four men, Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Jesus Christ and Adolf Hitler were recorded, come to the informative part. Here we begin with an account of the party. At the top is the National Management. First comes the party and storm battalion LEADER, Adolf Hitler, with a private secretary and an adjutant. Follow a Chief of Staff, a Treasurer and a Manager. Then comes Department O I, with an Organization Director (with assistant and adjutant), three Department Directors (Foreign Department, Press Department, Department for the Penetration of Labor Organizations); Experts for Bureaucracy, for Municipal Questions, for War Invalids, for Women.

Here we reach Department O II, with an Organization Director (and adjutant). Under him are seven departments: 1) Agriculture, with sub-departments for Agrarian questions, Recruiting, Eastern Territories, Market and Stock Exchange, Forestry, and Settlement (on the land); 2) Political Economics, with sub-departments for Finance, Trade and the Press; 3) Race and Culture; sub-departments for Preservation of Inherited Health (!) and Selective Eugenics (*Aufartung*), Music and the Theatre, the Press, the Radio, Moving Pictures and Heraldry; 4) Internal Politics; 5) Legal Politics; 6) Engineering and Technique; 7) Obligatory Labor. So much for Department O II.

Next in the list come the National Propaganda Managers I and II, the Manager of the Legal Department, the President of the Investigation and Adjustment Committee, and the Manager of Personnel. All this, mind you is connected with the National Management. So far we have not even left Munich.

Hitler divides Germany into 37 districts (*Gaue*) corresponding roughly to the military districts of the Imperial Army; in addition Austria rejoices in six districts, under a National Manager and a National Director, while there are district officials for the German portions of Czechoslovakia. Every district has a Leader and doubtless many other officials too insignificant to be mentioned.

In addition there is a National-Socialist Teachers Association, a National-Socialist German Physicians Association, and an Association of National-Socialist German Jurists.

Let us pass now to the military organization whose aim is to "conquer the streets." Adolf Hitler is described not as only the LEADER of the party, but also of the S.A.—mystic letters that signify several things, but primarily Storm Battalions (*Sturmabteilungen*) and are used generally to denote the party's private army.

Under the LEADER comes the Chief of Staff. Under the Chief of Staff are ranged a National Leader of the S.S. (*Schutzstaffel*), the personal bodyguard of the leader—picked for their fidelity, a National Youth Leader, a Corps Leader of Motor Groups; an Aviation Director (not in the Calendar), a General Inspector, a National Physician, and a Leader of the National Leader's School. Which brings us to the

Army itself. Hitler himself is the *Ober Osaf*, which means Upper-upper S.A. Leader. Under him are several common *Osafs*. Under each *Osaf* is a group, corresponding to an army corps. Each group is composed of two undergroups (divisions) each undergroup of three standards (regiments), each standard of three district storms (battalions), each district storm of three storms (companies), each storm of three trains (platoons), each train of three bands. In addition each District Leader may dispose of (but not command) a group of S.S. This arrangement was made after popular district leaders attempted to revolt against the Central Leadership and take the troops with them. Suffice it to say that this street army amounted at the time to nearly half a million, and that it was alleged that no less than eighty-five percent of them were unemployed and hence ready for adventure at a moment's notice. It is inconceivable that any German Chancellor, even a clerical militarist like Heinrich Brüning, should have allowed the construction and training of such a force, armed or unarmed. Why he did so has never been satisfactorily settled—perhaps never will be. So much for the organization as it was in January, 1932.

As party leaders somewhat ingenuously admitted, such a vast organization needed an Intelligence Service to keep informed of its enemies' intentions. The details of this super-espionage system have not been made public. But the results justified the highest praise. Apparently, in addition to the professional informers, all party members and sympathizers considered it their duty to keep the leaders informed of anything they might wish to know. Professional and

official secrecy was violated; telephone girls and telegraph operators divulged messages that passed through them and important State plans were often known in the Brown House in Munich before they reached the officials who were to carry them out. Political convicts were encouraged not to abandon their old parties but to remain where they were as National-Socialist spies. Unquestionably the Intelligence Service was a masterpiece of political efficiency.

If confirmation is sought that the party intended to dominate and to dominate by force, one need only note the fact that the youth organizations were under the direct orders of the Chief of Staff. These organizations were, at the time described, (they are frequently reorganized), "chick" organizations for babies; the Hitler Youth, divided into Young People, between ten and fifteen years old, and Hitler Youth proper, between fifteen and eighteen; then a National-Socialist Pupils' Association, with political courses and lectures, most of its members belonging, at the same time, to the Hitler Youth; a National-Socialist German Students' Association; and finally a Girls' Association. It was this deliberate dragging of the young into fanatical party politics that went far to produce the murderous guerrilla warfare that raged endemically throughout Germany after the advent of the National-Socialists.

Although as popular orator and mediocre scribe, Hitler himself believed the spoken word to be far more influential than the written, this opinion never prevented the party from creating an imposing string of publications throughout the country. The *National-Socialist Youth Calendar* for 1932, notes 46 daily

newspapers, four semi-weekly and 39 weekly publications, two semi-monthly and nine monthly journals. The list includes a comic paper and several professional organizations.

Besides these was a large and growing library of printed volumes explaining, exalting, affirming the party and its tenets, and a series of party book stores. And in addition, post-cards, calendars, almanacs, photographs galore, souvenirs, badges, special uniforms and party-manufactured cigarettes, whose use was obligatory for faithful members.

Quite plainly such a mammoth organization could not possibly be the personal work of one man. One of Hitler's talents consisted in attracting around him a number of extremely capable lieutenants and in skillfully playing them off one against the other, thus keeping practically all the power in his own hands. In every decisive matter the judgment of Hitler was absolute. To insure dependence, every National-Socialist candidate for office was required to deposit with the LEADER a promissory note in blank, which the latter could fill out and cash in case the elected candidate attempted to desert. A large number of party lieutenants were supposed to be in a condition of permanent financial dependence on their chief (Weigand von Miltenberg: *Adolf Hitler, Wilhelm III*). This limitless power was a source of unending pleasure to Hitler. When he announced that nothing could happen in the party without his consent, it was entirely in the manner of Louis XIV identifying himself personally with the French State.

Especially effective was Hitler's tact in overlooking alleged personal blemishes in the character or history

of valuable assistants. The National-Socialist party was from the beginning a heterogeneous collection of fanatics, privilege-seekers and adventurers. Many of the last had occasionally found themselves in what are euphemistically called "legal difficulties." Such brave spirits are the natural leaders of a party whose idea of power is not unlike that of Niccolo Machiavelli. Hitler made it clear that, in his opinion, politics were no profession for the over-scrupulous. So long as his lieutenants were efficient and faithful, their personal records and moral idiosyncrasies seemed not to interest the great LEADER. Notable is the hospitality and honor given to several of the former Vehme murderers and to various other personalities of unenviable notoriety. This should not be taken to mean that the party was led by convicts. To the contrary, the leadership was almost as variegated as the mass of adherents.

Who were the more interesting of the lieutenants? My personal choices made only after personal contact and considerable study of their respective performances, were Joseph Goebbels and Gregor Strasser.

Doctor of Philosophy Joseph Goebbels, commonly known as "the doctor," was small and un-Aryan in appearance, agreeable in manner, competent with a pen, middle class in conviction, cynically adaptable in opinion, unusually intelligent, second only to Hitler himself in oratory and supreme in that insolence which goes so far to impress wavering voters. He was National Propaganda Manager, leader of the Berlin District, and editor of the Berlin daily newspaper, *Der Angriff*.

The National Organization Manager, Gregor Strasser, was a man of a different sort. His opinions were (or seemed to be) more deeply rooted, he inclined to pre-Raphaelite socialism of a strong national color, and boasted of breaking his word of honor in the party service. His political aim, outside the acquisition of power, was undoing the French Revolution—an insignificant task for an ex-pharmacist from Landshut in Bavaria. He had been a good soldier, an irregular fighter for reaction, an early adherent of Hitler and an obvious realist, a rarity in the party. The hostility between the pharmacist and “the doctor” served to enliven the tediousness of unbroken political exertion.

Important, but hardly selected by destiny for the highest offices, were Gottfried Feder, Alfred Rosenberg and Ernst Röhm. Gottfried Feder was the author of the Party Program and the commentary upon it. But his claim to immortality will rest primarily upon his discovery of the difference between “creative” and “appropriative” capital and his passionate appeal to “break the bondage of interest.” It is true that the distinction is clear to few but Feder and his convert, Adolf Hitler. Hitler himself admitted having struggled with it for a long time. So far as an ignorant outsider can perceive, the difference lies in the racial origin of the possessor: money—so Feder believed—was “creative” in the hands of an Aryan manufacturer but not in those of a Jewish banker who lends it to the Aryan. Breaking the “bondage of interest” meant fiat interest rates for peasants and party members—and, unquestionably, the complete suffocation of any further willingness to lend.

The editor of the chief party newspaper, Alfred Rosenberg, was an intellectual mentor of Adolf Hitler and the author of many books. Hitler realized at an early age that confusion of blood is the chief source of human misery and of the decay of nations, but it was only from Rosenberg, who hailed from the Baltic countries and bore a suspiciously Jewish name, that the LEADER took over that full-fledged dogma of eugenics and the mission of the Aryan that enabled him to offer a substitute for the democracy he so hated. Rosenberg's muses were apparently Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose influence can be traced wherever patriotic Germans go astray, and Hermann Wirth, an interesting Dutchman who believed that all human culture is the product of the single Aryan race, which originated in North America and swept over Europe via Greenland, Iceland and Ireland. Rosenberg's literary talents were largely employed in combating Israel. From a list of his complete works I cull the following: *The Trace of the Jews down the Changing Ages*; *The Crime of Free Masonry*; *The Basel Congress of the World Conspirators*; *Pest in Russia*; *Immorality in the Talmud*, and *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, a pretentious work that claimed to carry on racial enlightenment from where Chamberlain left it.

Unlike Feder and Rosenberg, Ernst Röhm was a man of action. His entire life seemed conceived as a military campaign. A former professional officer, he conspired against the Republic, left the *Reichswehr* as a captain, went as lieutenant-colonel and instructor in the Army to Bolivia and returned to Germany just in time to become Adolf Hitler's Chief of Staff. As

such, Röhm was chiefly responsible for the magnificent organization of the brown-shirted Storm Battalions, whose real purpose was the "conquering of the street." Even those to whom Röhm's barrack-room tastes were unsympathetic, admired his organizing genius; some went so far as to state that without Röhm, Hitler could not have succeeded in becoming a public menace.

Nothing but the prospect of speedy benefits could have kept such desperate leaders together.

Quite clearly, the greater the assets of which the party disposed, the more jobs it had to offer, the less disposed its beneficiaries were to leave merely because of some unimportant clash of principle. Hitler, who understood such matters instinctively, cleverly exploited this feeling. Furthermore, as the party advanced toward political power, and the goal came in sight, the mouths of the hungry leaders began to water. National-Socialism had become a giant business hardly equaled even by the vast co-operative interests of the Social-Democrats. It had become not only the political vision, but the concrete investment of the thousands who gave it their entire time, energy and devotion. These people could not withdraw without total loss.

Even more important was the principle of absolute LEADERSHIP in enabling Hitler to collect and hold together such a heterogeneous mass of followers representing twenty different sorts of discontent. For LEADERSHIP of this sort had the immense advantage of precluding discussion and the followers never had the opportunity of learning that they were in reality united by nothing but their hatred of the

present "System" and their touching trust in their LEADER.

Why should Hitler care, if, in the words of the Italian revolutionary theorist, Malaparte (*Technique du coup d'Etat*), in his party "liberty of conscience, the sentiment of personal dignity, intelligence and culture are persecuted with that stupid and brutal hatred that characterize third-class dictators" so long as he could answer that not empty words but dazzling dictatorial power was his aim and that his methods had brought him well along the road to acquiring it?

CHAPTER XXII

"DEUTSCHLAND ERWACHE!"

"If I had founded the Party, I should not have put out any program at all."

JOSEPH GOEBBELS.

"GERMANY awake, perish the Jew!"
"Hail Hitler!"

"Rather a terrible end than an endless terror!"

"Let the French re-invade the Ruhr!"

"Who will protect us from Polish attack?"

"Better for three million to die on the field of battle than starve to death!"

"Clear the street for the brown battalions!"

"Down with democracy!"

"We spit on freedom!"

"Something has to happen."

Such were phrases heard during a period of nearly two years throughout the most intellectual of European countries, not once, but endlessly.

Not a week passed without political murders, not a night without a clash between National-Socialists and Republicans. Furious fights between organized political gangs were commonplace, the weapons being fists, sticks, black-jacks, brass knuckles, knives, revolvers, hand grenades and, occasionally, rifles and bombs. Jews, Communists, Socialists and Republicans

were subject to regular assassination and (excepting the Jews) defended themselves in kind. Nearly always there were dead and wounded on both sides. The fight went on in the universities, even in the intermediate schools. Isolated Jews, suddenly hated, boycotted and attacked by former comrades, sometimes killed themselves in despair. In the rural districts, bands of debt-burdened farmers raised the Black Flag of the Peasant Wars, hurled bombs, burned houses and hay stacks, murdered. The reactionaries were not always the aggressors, but it was they who turned a peaceful people into a nation of brutal brawlers.

Throughout the entire land, from Schleswig to Bavaria, from the Moselle Valley to Memel, came and went the National-Socialist agitators, crazy for political power, preaching violence, xenophobia, revolt, hatred of Catholics, Jews and "Marxist traitors," non-payment of taxes, anti-democracy, contempt for the Parliament and for popular rule.

Their brown-clad private army, nearly half a million strong, organized by ex-officers on the lines of a real army, with Intelligence Service, Motor Corps and Aviation, half-armed, hungry, insolent, whipped into frenzy by demagoguery and despair, mobilized, marched, maligned, attacked, mutilated and killed those who disputed their insolent claim to rule. Against them the militant Communists reacted savagely. The Republicans organized in the Iron Front, and in any number of factories, trained special Hammer Squads for organized sabotage on the day when the General Strike would be pitted against the armed insurrection of the Hitlerites. Even the ultra-pacific Catholics were finally stung into action by constant provocation,

and, in Bavaria, their private army of over a hundred thousand brawny young men made the Brown Shirts think twice before attacking.

Along the crazy, ill-drawn Eastern Frontier, country lads, National-Socialists, Steel Helmet, Republican *Reichsbanner*, under the leadership of men old enough to know better, mustered in a “Frontier Guard,” collected and stored arms, organized and trained in nocturnal “maneuvers” to repel the “imminent Polish attack.”

In the background, in the slums, clustered around the doorways of the dying factories, standing in giant queues before the windows of the dole dispensaries, was the army of unemployed, five, six, seven million of them, dark lines under their eyes and darker expression in them. Had the German reactionaries been as religious as they claimed to be, they would each day have fallen upon their knees and thanked God for the world depression. For without it Germany would not have been theirs!

Murder, nationalism and obscurantism stalked boldly through the country that but a few short years before had boasted itself “the freest Republic in the world!” An entire nation playing at soldiering! Back to the barracks! was the slogan of shrewd reactionaries, who would have preferred to rule a land of helots rather than be common citizens of a great and free community. Youth, habitually impatient and forward-looking, had turned its back on the present, idealistic as ever, but idealizing, not a progressive future, but a romanticized past.

Unemployment was the seed-bed of the hatred and chaos and reaction, but the chief gardener was Adolf

Hitler, the former corporal, called "Austria's revenge for its defeat at Sadowa."

In 1871 the German people were formally united at the close of a miraculously easy and successful war, but because of the autocratic régime that followed they failed to acquire organic unity.

In 1914, they accepted hostilities with an enthusiasm equaled only in countries like Japan and Serbia. In the Army the men lived and died in an "organic commonwealth." Comradeship, community of purpose, free eating, smoking, drinking, lack of personal responsibility save in the fulfillment of orders, a certain social harmony—all contributed to an experience that marked many of the adolescent soldiers for life. For, aside from the danger, the discomforts, the privations, here was the sort of existence that they really liked. The absence of personal liberty—so galling to more developed peoples—seems to have worried few of them. *In the trenches, perhaps for the first time in history, the German people were really united.* Army unity and nationalist frustration were the parents of the movement that was later to be called National-Socialism.

It lay to the interest of the former German rulers at all costs to prevent the imminence of a German Sedan in November, 1918, from reaching the minds of the masses. Defeat, however honorable, brought bitterness: one cannot struggle to win even a ping-pong game for over four years without suffering under failure. The Versailles Treaty infected the German national pride with nothing less than gangrene—and it remained toxic, for in order not to resent the Versailles Treaty—aside from any real, material in-

conveniences it caused—the beaten Germans would have had to repudiate their former rulers, morally as well as politically. Such repudiation would have made the fifty-one months of life and death struggle senseless, and this struggle had seemed to many the most valuable experience of their lives. If the war was senseless, then the dead had died in vain. Not even the Socialists could face such a sacrifice of pride. Even they complained that the democratic world "expected them to repent." It was not personal repentance the occidental world asked of the Germans, but the confession that their pre-war leadership had been anachronistic, their Prussian philosophy of force erroneous, and modern warfare a catastrophe for all concerned. German national pride balked at this confession, or, at least, demanded as the price for it absolution without penance.

Since it balked, it necessarily began hunting other reasons for its undeniable humiliation and misery, and the discredited former leaders, snatching at the slightest chance of rehabilitation, came forward with the legend of the "unbeaten army stabbed in the back by unpatriotic workmen." This was the first step toward reaction.

The signing of the Versailles Treaty by the new Republican Government was the second: literally, millions turned away from a democracy that could not avoid such humiliation. The Republican rulers felt compelled to devote most of their energy, not to solidifying democracy and freedom within, but to fantastic and generally futile schemes for resisting the "foreign enemy."

The people were exhausted in body and mind.

Everything they had done since 1914 had failed. The German Republic was new, and in a way experimental, its leaders were none too competent. Furthermore, it was in the first years more or less controlled by a coalition consisting of the "conscious Catholics," whom the Protestant majority had always disliked, of the Democrats who managed in their persons to combine the triple odium of being "Jewish," Liberal" and "Western," and of the Socialists, who were low-class, "destructive" and "international." Therefore, it was inevitable that the passion at first directed against foreign blood-suckers should be eventually vented on the "internal enemies." No elected government can stand fourteen years of almost unbroken rule. All that was needed was for some one to rally the twenty-odd sorts of popular discontent about a single flag, for this passion to become self-conscious and politically dangerous. The person who appeared was Adolf Hitler, who thereby became the uncontested prophet, organizer and LEADER of the *Consolidated German Reaction, Incorporated*, as one is tempted to call his movement.

Hitler possessed several qualities that marked him out for leadership. First of all, his capacity for belief. Unshakably, he believed in himself. He believed in a hazy, aristocratic racial philosophy. He was not an aristocrat, but a man of the common people, a beer-mug philosopher. He believed utterly in that system of autocratic organization, thanks to which he attracted all the more servile of the German masses. At the same time, he believed in no concrete fact, in no theory so firmly that he could not abandon it if it became an obstacle along the flowery path to power.

This was not insincerity. It was subjectivism, but to the masses such debonair egocentricism might have seemed a little self-centered. Every born politician knows, of course, that the primary aim of political parties is to oust opponents in order to take their places, but Hitler realized that, expressed thus plainly, this purpose might awaken the suspicion of crude ambition. A successful party, whatever its real aims, needs an idealistic platform to stand on. So at an early date he set about collecting building material for the purpose.

The finished product, which the National-Socialists liked to call their “intellectual property” (*Gedankengut*), was a bird’s nest of odds and ends— notions, theories and assumption, some of which Hitler had gathered in his Viennese days, and some of which he added later by the simple process of appropriation. After all, the main thing was to possess a party ladder.

Formally, the National-Socialist platform was laid down in 1920 by Gottfried Feder and, in 1926, declared “unalterable.” By the summer of 1932 over 350,000 printed copies of it had been sold! Nonetheless it was anything but an asset to the party. Some of its twenty-five planks were good enough: nearly all Germans disliked the Versailles Treaty, many wished for a return of the lost colonies and a considerable group dreamed of uniting all the German-speaking peoples of Europe in a vast empire (apparently whether they liked it or not). Seven of the twenty-five planks arranged for the dis-enfranchisement and partial expulsion of the Jews. The passages concerning the assistance to be given to gifted children of poor parents, the protection of motherhood

and the encouragement of sport were admirable. The trouble lay in the total absence of any clear line of thought. Although as time went on, the party leaders would have liked to sink the platform in the bottom of the Rhine, they were continually compelled to defend and circulate it since it had been declared "unalterable."

For in this "unalterability" there lay method. In the first place, prophets do not change their minds. Moses never edited the Ten Commandments. Therefore, the prophet of the Third Empire had also to abide by the party's original pronouncement. In the second place, as he explained, it is better to stick to a first text, even if outstripped by events, than to confuse disciples by modifications (programs do not mean very much in politics, anyway). And in the third place, tenacious attachment to original dogma prevented radical adherents like the Strassers from getting control of the party steering wheel and perhaps dropping the original pilot.

Since, however, the program lacked any real harmony or general color, it had to be continually interpreted and explained. The document itself covers three and a half pages. The explanation by the author, Gottfried Feder, fills sixty-four pages. Obviously, in seeking for the party doctrine it would not be fair to look too critically at the original text. The real "intellectual property" of the National-Socialists, in so far as they had any, lay scattered in twenty different publications, but were most thickly deposited in the LEADER'S autobiography, *My Struggle*.

The National-Socialist State was not to be an end in itself but an expression of the people. But wait a

minute! A people is a “unity, totality and value” only to the extent that it incarnates a superior race. This suggests the chief purpose of the “racial State.” It must “place the race in the center of the common life. It must see to keeping the race pure” (Hitler, *My Struggle*, p. 446). For Germany, the “race” can mean only the Aryan or Nordic race. Here lay the holy of holies—*“the belief embodied in the sublime knowledge that Nordic blood represents that Mystery which has replaced and vanquished the ancient sacraments”* (Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*).

What a task for the Third Empire! For excepting a few tiny localities, nowhere in this country did there exist a Nordically pure race. Perhaps not, answered Professor Hans Günther, the party’s racial expert, but by careful selection the Germans could be again “nordicized.” Alfred Rosenberg favored the introduction of legal polygamy to facilitate the process. After the French evacuation of the Rhineland, a party newspaper suggested immediate slaughter of all children who had resulted from the violation of German women, or whose appearance indicated a father of “Negroid, Oriental, Near Eastern or Hamitic race.” A party order dated Munich, December 31, 1931, subjected the marriage of the selected “S.S.” troops to permission by the party. Refusal to comply meant dismissal. Plans were extensively discussed for dividing all German girls into four classes, the first consisting of the best ten percent, among whom the new “noblemen” of pure race might freely select; the second of questionable purity, who could only be married by “noblemen” after favorable report by the Chief

Breeder (*Zuchtwart*); a third class who must be sterilized before being allowed to marry, and a fourth who were neither to marry nor to reproduce. Here was eugenic fervor! (A cynical foreigner suggested that there might be something unfair in thus making class four women irresistibly popular!) As Hitler himself put it (speech in Nürnberg, August 7, 1929), "If Germany were to eliminate (the weakest) seven or eight hundred thousand of the million children born annually, the final result would be an increase of (national) strength." Which would not be very unlike the practice in that Spartan State that Hitler told the American public (*New York Times*, December 8, 1931) was what he was aiming at.

That science long since exploded the mythical superiority of the Nordics or long-heads—that a purely long-headed race would have had to dispense with such "inferior" Germans as Luther, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Goethe, Bismarck—and Hitler—made no more impression on these racial fanatics than did the obvious materialism underlying their "idealist philosophy." Moreover, such teaching was profoundly un-Christian and unjustifiable among a group that claimed to fight for Christian culture. For Christian teachings absolutely preclude any determinism save the mysterious Grace of God!

This applies equally well to the anti-semitic mania. It is likely that Hitler first hated the Jews and then decided they were inferior. Their supposed physical ugliness is a "fixation" to which he returned repeatedly. The portions of *My Struggle* giving Hitler's ac-

count of the Semitic penetration into Germany are among the best in this garden of racial humor.

With the disenfranchising of the Jews, would, of course, disappear the real basis of Marxian Socialism (which Hitler and his friends conceived as part of a Jewish plot to enslave free Aryans) and the danger of any sort of radical revolution.

To be sure, in 1920, when Hitler helped write the party program, he still undoubtedly believed in revolution, the romanticism of the trenches. When he left the fortress at Landsberg in 1924, he still apparently hesitated between capitalism and some sort of socialism. But when, in 1925, the Strasser brothers with Goebbels and some North Germans tried to take the party away from him and make it socialistic, he reacted violently and with success. In 1930 he drove Otto Strasser out of the party because of the latter's radicalism, for socialism is not an aristocratic philosophy.

Hitler admitted to Otto Strasser that "socialism" was not really the exact word for that which he was seeking. Yet Gottfried Feder had furnished him with a formula—"breaking the bondage of interest"—thanks to which he might publicly proclaim himself "German socialistic," while actually striving for economic reaction of a peculiarly ferocious type.

Now socialism either means the collective ownership of the means of economic production, or nothing at all. Not in his theory of interest, but in his attitude to private property, is the Socialist discernible. Judged by this touchstone, the National-Socialists were capitalists of almost pure water.

Psychologically or politically unable to urge the abolition of private property, Hitler, Feder and their allies were led, in their search for some socialistic-seeming bait for the masses, to endorse a monetary theory that would not fool an intelligent adolescent. In practice it would amount to the abolition of gold and the substitution of limitless paper with a resulting repetition of the post-war inflationary experiments of numerous countries. Interest can only be abolished by suppressing lending or by milking the National Treasury. There is no conceivable means except State subvention that can preserve capitalistic production, yet destroy capitalistic credit, and a system of State subvention may not properly call itself capitalistic. Nor is taxation for the benefit of the rich exactly what the millions expected from National-Socialism.

Adolf Hitler was, in his heart, a ferocious reactionary. That this did not prevent him from becoming the LEADER of millions whose nearest approach to a common denominator was their hatred of capitalism, testified to his consummate skill as practical politician. He succeeded in persuading millions *blindly* to trust their future to him, a revivalist phenomenon. The party newspapers announced that "the sight of Hitler preserves the despairing from suicide."

He, first, among German politicians felt the young people's need for sympathy and the re-expression of old longings in contemporary terms. Failure to appeal to unhappy youth cost the Socialist parties the fidelity of millions of pre-destined adherents. Hitler had a nose for the intra-family struggle between fathers and sons occasioned by war and reparations and unemployment. The sons who had had no part in the war

refused to suffer for it! Equally stupendous was Hitler's skill in feeding the hostility of the German Protestants to the Catholics. Masterly was his appeal to the women—not, as you might have expected, by promising greater rights and concessions, but by promising to relieve them of participation in public affairs altogether, to take them out of the offices and the factories, and to provide each and every one of them with a husband!

Hitler collected his motley army by the trick of taking all their troubles upon his shoulders. Though he preached doctrines that, if realized, would inevitably have led to European slaughter, he convinced the masses that he desired nothing so much as quiet and order and an end to political chaos.

The political ideal of National-Socialism was apparently a somewhat Germanized copy of Mussolini's Corporative or Guild State. Yet nowhere in the world could Big Business be happier than in Fascist Italy for there the State assumed the major risks. Hitler's dream was a party tyranny along Fascist lines with the practical abolition of self-government and the creation of a self-perpetuating dictatorship. The most certain promise was complete militarism. The National-Socialists clamored for universal conscription as a splendid schooling for subsequent citizenship. As Hitler quaintly put it, ten generations without military training and Germany would have lost the remainder of its independence.

All that he told the foreign press about his pacific intentions was belied by his own writings and those of his followers. The important leader, Colonel Constantin Hierl, wrote that no country ever recovers its

freedom without a struggle. At the end of a policy of resistance stands the war of liberation, for, as Hitler wrote: "Without increase of territory the (German) people appears to be dedicated to decline" (*My Struggle*). He recommended a German alliance with Italy and Great Britain, while stating that "an alliance whose aim does not include the intention of war is worthless nonsense". For "Germany will either be a world power or will cease to be" (*My Struggle*).

Yet whoever sought for the reality of the National-Socialist movement in its doctrine was wasting his time. This pudding of half-baked eugenics and unbaked economics, was for show, not for eating. It was placed in the party shop-window to attract the hungry. Once inside, the situation changed: the reality that then emerged was long since celebrated in the immortal ballad of the Spider and the Fly.

Did it work? Incomparably. Consider the development of the party: *Reichstag* election, May, 1924 (German Racial Freedom Party, as it was first called) 1,918,310 votes, 6.5 percent of ballot, 32 seats; *Reichstag* election, December, 1924 (German Racial Freedom Movement) 906,946 votes, 3 percent of ballot, 14 seats (the Dawes Plan had been accepted and the currency stabilized); *Reichstag* election, May, 1928 (National-Socialist German Labor Party) 809,541 votes and 12 seats; *Reichstag* election, September, 1930 (same name) 6,406,397 votes, 18.33 percent of ballot, 107 seats (thus showing clearly the results of the economic depression plus the deliberate nationalizing of the masses by the Government); Presidential election, March, 1932, (for Adolf Hitler) 11,344,119 votes or over 30 percent of ballot; second ballot,

April, 1932 (for Adolf Hitler) 13,417,460 votes or almost 37 percent of the total ballot; *Reichstag* election, July 31, 1932, (National-Socialist German Labor Party) 13,733,000 votes, over 37 percent of ballot, 230 seats.

The National-Socialists went through the July, 1932, *Reichstag* election campaign under the slogan: "All power to Adolf Hitler!" and failed to realize it. Never was lust for dictatorship more coolly proclaimed. Despots should respect the commoner who managed to induce fourteen million compatriots to lay their entire destiny in his single hands—the bold demagogue who so brazenly went about inducing a free people to renounce its liberty!

Adolf Hitler fostered the German reaction and focused it around three enemies: the foreigners who made and were upholding the Treaty of Versailles; the German Republicans who signed it and more or less ruled the country until 1930; and the organized labor that had secured such wide-spread privileges by force of democracy. In addition, Hitler directed public emotion with great success against Catholics, Jews, internationalists and pacifists.

The National-Socialist party had, by the spring of 1932 acquired such strength that the advent of Adolf Hitler to dictatorship seemed only a matter of weeks or months. And then? His natural allies, the very conservative, nationalistic groups whose chestnuts he had, in such abundance, pulled from the fire, played a trick on him!

In the atmosphere Hitler had created, the maintenance of even the forms of democracy was obviously unimportant. For nearly two years Heinrich Brüning

had been governing by Emergency Decrees based upon the confidence of Hindenburg. Repeatedly, he had sought to come to terms with Hitler and bring the latter into governmental participation, only to fail. Public opinion showed no surprise when, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference, President von Hindenburg brusquely provoked Brüning to resign under charge of nothing less than "Bolshevism." Brüning's "Bolshevism" consisted in his desire to buy up some of the bankrupt big estates along the Polish border and distribute them among German peasants, whose presence would then form an impenetrable barrier against Polish "infiltration." This was too much for the nobly-born owners. They were, to be sure, bankrupt; they had, indeed, spread the fear of Polish "infiltration" throughout the country. But just whose country was Germany—or at least, Prussia? These land-owning *Junkers* had governed the land for centuries. Furthermore, they happened to be Hindenburg's social colleagues, his most trusted friends and old-time cronies. His choice of Chancellor proved this fact.

Germany had awakened only too well to Hitler's raucous exhortations and his steady "drumming." Not only the living Germans but the ghosts of the past as well! Brüning's political ineptitude opened the door to reaction. In through the portals there poured as surprising a crowd as ever survived a revolution. The friends, not of Hitler, but of Hugenberg! The new "Monocle" or "Barons'" Cabinet of Franz von Papen consisted almost entirely of former nobility and ultra-conservative officials who might have come straight from some historical museum. Yet in the midst of this

moth-ball atmosphere stalked one smiling figure of unmistakable modernity. Who should it be but the tutelary genius of renascent German militarism, General Kurt von Schleicher?

It took Adolf Hitler three months to realize that he had been double-crossed.

CHAPTER XXIII

“GOTT MIT UNS!”

“If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be, in any particular, wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for although this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.”

GEORGE WASHINGTON, *Farewell Address*.

IN THE fourteenth year of its existence, the German Republic became the private concern of a little Group of adventurous patriots, who seized the power in an unexpected manner and ruled autocratically, for the supposed good of the people.

The moral and legal authority for this procedure was vested entirely in Field Marshal Baron Paul von Beneckendorf und von Hindenburg, foremost national hero, honorary citizen of two hundred cities, who had allowed himself to be re-elected to the presidency, only to decide that his electors were thenceforth unfit to govern themselves.

The chief members of the small but daring Group were:

Lieutenant Colonel Oskar von Beneckendorf und von Hindenburg, active army officer and the President's son;

Otto Meissner, the Alsatian State Secretary in the Presidential Office and adviser to the President;

Lieutenant Colonel Baron Franz von Papen, former cavalry officer and crack gentleman rider, one-time Military Attaché in Washington, ex-member of the Catholic Center Party, Chancellor of the German Republic;

Lieutenant General Kurt von Schleicher, *Reichswehr* Minister, regimental comrade of Hindenburg, maker of two chancellors and Germany's Strong Man;

Schleicher's three brilliant assistants, Major Erich Marcks, son of the historian, Erich Marcks, National Press Chief; Captain Erwin Planck, son of the great physicist, Max Planck, State Secretary in the Chancellery; and Colonel Ferdinand von Bredow, State Secretary in the Ministry of Defense;

Baron Wilhelm von Gayl, jurist, agricultural expert, professed monarchist and Minister of the Interior.

So much for the principal members. They formed a Cabinet by the further attachment of one count, three barons, one nobleman (*Edler*) and three commoners.

Behind the new rulers stood no considerable mass of Germans; except Hugenberg's monarchical Nationalists. Yet although they scornfully repudiated the support of political parties, they intended, so Schleicher announced, to remain in office "about four years."

For the forces behind them, if slim, were decisive: the Army—trained to obey the President and him alone; the former privileged classes, to whom their coming promised a new lease on life; a few owners of heavy industry; the nationalist press of Alfred

Hugenberg. These they quickly reinforced by adopting the Steel Helmet organization and by violently capturing the large and well organized Prussian police.

Thus equipped, the Group appealed for a "national concentration," flung an almost royal mantle of awe about the person of the venerable President, and, impervious to anything so ephemeral as the will of the people, throttled the Republic of Weimar in the name of God.

This the new leaders called "renovating Germany."

Now, as is sometimes alleged in murder cases, a good share of the guilt rested on the victim. A constitutional amendment was long over-due. Partly on this account, the national psychosis that centered about Adolf Hitler had not only reached dangerous proportions but had paralyzed the never too efficient *Reichstag*.

This body, unable itself to formulate any constructive program, had passively accepted Brüning's Emergency Decrees solely through fear of Hitler. Yet the latter refused to co-operate: Germany hung poised above his outstretched hand and he saw no reason why he should share his prize with a Government as the price of a step-ladder, when, by waiting a little, he could have the fruit all to himself. The choice before the Cabinet had therefore seemed to be, either turning the Government over to Hitler as a dictator, with risks of a labor uprising and a permanently divided people, or the violent suppression of Hitlerism—if possible—which might mean another sort of civil war, for the younger elements in

the Army and the police were in sympathy with the professed ultra-patriotism of his movement.

Hindenburg and the Group had nothing against reaction as such—they were too Prussian to respond very actively to ideas of personal liberty or self-government. But they had no patience with the hysterical party tyranny, the unorthodox economic views, the terrorism advocated by the LEADER. And they did not intend to permit the strong military State which was their ideal to be endangered by civil war or weakened by party tyranny of any sort. For, as Chancellor von Papen afterwards put it, the strengthening of German influence in the world—restoring the *sacrum imperium*, the Holy Roman Empire—through rapid demolition of the Versailles Treaty, was the country's chief task. The critical domestic situation was therefore both a reason and an occasion for entrusting the political power to his friends in the Group.

The aim was fourfold: to steal from Hitler his millions of patriotic partisans and utilize their enthusiasm for another purpose; to restore private capitalism and fortify it against future Socialist attack; to re-establish the almost obsolete Christian foundation of the German State; and finally, to reorganize the German Constitution and structure so as to perpetuate the rule of a few such strong-minded Nationalists as themselves. For they felt that only through reducing the popular rights to the privilege of electing a dictator once every few years, could they save the "absolute" Germany of their dreams from the possibly less heroic whims of merely mortal Germans.

The Group had, to be sure, looked upon the National-Socialists with relative benevolence, so long as the party was merely large enough to terrify the Socialists. But as militarists they loathed disorder and political parties of any sort, as landowners they had no desire to allow their bankrupt estates to be divided among peasants with "dark instincts" (their own were dark enough), and as business men they considered "autarchy" a form of masochism whose pleasure they did not share. They had not the least intention of allowing their properties to be socialized and their incomes restricted to five thousand dollars a year, as many National-Socialists advocated. Labor was, for the time being, helpless, and wages could be forced down almost at will. An annual average of five or six million unemployed vouched for that. And finally, they disliked Hitler as a demagogue and a parvenu. The thing to do therefore was to canalize his middle-class revolutionary movement, and get world business going again.

The Group began by proclaiming itself a "presidential" as opposed to a "parliamentary" Cabinet, whose task was to establish the "authoritative State," and dissolved the decrepit *Reichstag*. The new rulers were, they said, loyal to the Weimar Constitution, *as they understood it*. But their understanding did not extend to observance of Article 54, which stated that the Cabinet must have the confidence of the *Reichstag*, for they had decided to dissolve any future *Reichstag* that threatened to disagree with their leadership before it could manifest its lack of confidence. And until such a time as the people elected a parliament that would do the Group's bidding, they

would continue to rule by Emergency Decree under the dictatorial Paragraph 48. The neat little scheme was not new. In 1923, during the serious disorders resulting from inflation, Ebert had been ready to do the same, but had not needed to because the *Reichstag* submitted to his will.

The task of taming Hitler could best be accomplished through carrying out all the non-dangerous portions of his program. Therefore after dissolving the old *Reichstag*, the Group lifted (June 21) the Brüning ban on Hitler's uniformed Storm Battalions (S.A. and S.S.). This was called allowing them to "play Indian." They "played Indian" so successfully that the monthly quota of political murders which had averaged about eight since the first of the year, rose to nineteen in June and eighty-six in July.

The new election was set for July 31st. Apparently Hitler had been promised several seats in the Cabinet and the position of Minister President in Prussia. So when the Prussian Ministers threatened to spoil the game of Indian by arresting all rowdies, the Cabinet, with the approval of the President (July 20th) simply turned the Prussians out of their Ministries and replaced them by a Deputy Commissioner—a procedure which the State Court at Leipzig later—as was expected from such judges—loyally upheld!

The rape of Prussia caused all the reactionaries more joy than anything for years. To Adolf Hitler it seemed to prove that the power he had fought twelve years to acquire was virtually in his hands. The Cabinet thought otherwise. For although it dismissed Social-Democratic and Republican officials by the score it filled their places, not with National-Social-

ists, but with tried conservatives of the Hugenberg stamp, on whom it could count for support. This was called "cleansing the country of political appointees."

Those who waited for the popular explosion, waited in vain. The German democrats did not, it seemed, value self-government to the point of fighting for it.

Popular participation in the *Reichstag* election of July 31st reached the record figure of about eighty-five per cent, but failed to produce a positive majority that might have forced the Group to resign or perpetrate an open *coup d'état*. Yet the National-Socialists, on the basis of thirty-eight per cent of the votes, raised the claim for exclusive power and when the Group refused, the Storm Battalions ran wild and, in East Prussia and Silesia, fell upon opponents like wolves. Near Beuthen a Communist was dragged from his bed and trodden to death by a group of fanatics. Public opinion was revolted—but Hitler announced his personal solidarity with the murderers. About this time, a State's Attorney, Baron von Steinaecker, publicly appealed to judges to discriminate between identical crimes committed by patriots whose aims were "honor, freedom and country," and Communists who sought "the destruction of the *Reich* and its culture!" This was too much even for a fanaticized people.

On August 9th, the Cabinet issued an Emergency Decree establishing special courts and the death penalty for political excesses. As a result political manslaughter declined at once.

Meanwhile the Group made the next effort to tame Adolf Hitler. Through the *Reichswehr* Minister it

tempted him with the chancellorship! But not, alas, as dictator or even as head of a ruling party—merely as the representative of Hindenburg in a "presidential" cabinet in which Hitler's friends would not occupy a majority of the places. The Army, notably, would have remained in the hands of Schleicher. Hitler hesitated. On August 11th, he confessed to Papen that, once in power, he would be unable to prevent his followers from indulging in two or three days public "revenge," for which he could not reasonably be held responsible. The idea pleased Papen little and Hindenburg even less. Hitler was finally offered, not the chancellorship but the vice-chancellorship. Papen cleverly tempted him into asking for the "same position as Mussolini had after his march on Rome." Whereupon Hindenburg indignantly refused, and when Hitler and his escort had flounced out, the old President scornfully boomed: "And such a fellow expects to be Chancellor of Germany! I'll make him a postman!"

The first result of the rupture between Hindenburg and Hitler was an exodus from the National-Socialist party of nearly all the aristocratic, conservative and very rich elements who had joined it with an eye to a restoration of privilege. Not only did they leave the party, they became apologetic about ever having rubbed shoulders with a hysterical plebeian like Hitler. Their excuse was that "at that time" Hitler had seemed their only hope. Now that Papen was proving a better hope, they gladly changed horses. A year before at Bad Harzburg, Hitler and Hugenberg had sworn brotherhood in a common "national opposition" to Brüning; now the break between them was

complete. Papen secured from Hindenburg a partial pardon for the five National-Socialist murderers of Beuthen, but he publicly announced that he and not Hitler was pursuing the aims dear to Hitler's followers.

The National-Socialists, foaming at the mouth, replied by seeking, both in the Prussian Diet and in the *Reichstag*, to form a coalition with the Catholic Centre which would have given them a negative majority. At the same time, something had to be done to prevent the last of the rich backers from going over to the "presidential" cabinet. Under pressure of patriotic competition, the National-Socialist leaders coolly abandoned their two major tenets: dictatorship and Socialism. They announced their championship of the democratic rights of the *Reichstag* against the "gentlemen" and, through the mouth of Gregor Strasser, repudiated the last traces of socialism left in their program! (As a matter of fact, Hitler has always despised workmen.)

Meanwhile, Franz von Papen, with admirable serenity, published the long awaited program of economic recovery. Its essential character, like those of similar plans in other countries, was reflationary. But instead of lending money to banks, the German Cabinet, with unparalleled generosity, gave it to private firms on condition of their employing more people.

All firms were authorized to reduce individual wages so long as the aggregate wage figure was maintained; especially needy companies might reduce them as far as they liked. Yet though such a step might be helpful, the Chancellor's express aim would have entailed the destruction of the net of business

monopoly that was choking private initiative. The restoration of private capitalism pre-supposed, not new subsidies, but ruthlessly driving the German pseudo-capitalists back into the field of competition. Any plan that failed to attempt this, must appear to the suffering nation as crudely plutocratic. The business press applauded, but the wedge between the Group and the people was unquestionably widened.

Not that this worried Schleicher and his friends much. They had become convinced that Germany could only be "renovated" against the will of the Germans. Furthermore, as the Chancellor more than once stated, a conservative policy finds its support in the divinely established order of things and conservative rulers are responsible to God alone.

The opening of the *Reichstag* proved, however, that, whatever objections there might be to his policy, the Chancellor had no intention of abandoning it. The summer's crop of deputies met and elected the National-Socialist, Captain Hermann Goering, to be President (Speaker). Meanwhile the Chancellor obtained from the aged President at the latter's farm in East Prussia a blank writ of dissolution. At the next session (September 12th), Papen had intended to read his program. Instead of which, President Goering attempted to surprise him by securing a quick vote against the recent Emergency Decrees. The Chancellor had not expected to need his writ but the dull-wittedness of the *Reichstag* gave him time to secure it and, after vainly asking for the floor, he laid the fateful document upon the President's desk while the vote-counting was going on. New elections were called for November 6th. The Group had gained two

full months in which to continue its work of stealing Hitler's thunder.

It was paradoxical: whereas the members of the ruling coterie were personally perhaps more intelligent and tolerant than most of their predecessors, they extracted from the political rag-bag, and sought again to popularize ideas like authority, conservatism, concentration of power, divine will, Christian militarism, that had made pre-war Prussianism so objectionable to other peoples.

Now the field of visible militarism had been limited by the Versailles Treaty. Evasions of the Treaty had begun almost before it was ratified; nonetheless it remained a considerable handicap on the national ambition. Even before the reparations were finally done away with, Heinrich Brüning had passed on to the next and most important point of the German revisionist program: "equal status in armament" (*Gleichberechtigung*) with the other powers. But it was Papen and his Foreign Minister Neurath who, under the clever slogan of "German security," made it a living issue. War Minister Schleicher truculently promised that East Prussia would be "defended under all circumstances" and that if the assembled Powers at the Geneva Disarmament Conference disbanded without giving Germany satisfaction, that country would feel free to set aside the Treaty and arrange its armaments as it saw fit!

The next step was the national round-up of German youth for rudimentary military training. The numerous semi-military associations and private armies had gone about as far as they could. Midnight military maneuvers were in many parts of the country com-

mon-place. But the new Cabinet wished to concentrate this "magnificent material" in its own hands, and direct its activities openly. Accordingly, it organized the National Trusteeship for the Training of Youth (*Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung*) where at first in twenty camps, later in more, the German youth could be trained in military life, physical culture, long marches with heavy packs, measuring distances, sketching, carrying messages and a kind of weaponless military game. This training was known as "ground sport." Physical training, rifle practice and "ground sport" were defined (*Deutsche Wehr*, Sept. 30, 1932) as the "three chief sections of military sport." For the purpose of aiding neophytes the Ministry of the Interior published a small hand-book called "Scouting and Roving" (*Spaehen und Streifen*). Furthermore, military publications designated the home, the school, the Church and the Army, as the appropriate instruments for making the country "military minded."

A special appeal was made to the schools to leave off encouraging dangerous illusions like the League of Nations and internationalism, and once more to turn out graduates inoculated with the good old maxim, "My country, right or wrong!" And finally, to crown this edifice of resurgent militarism, in the Autumn of 1932, Tübingen University created a chair for "Military Science" whose first occupant was none other than Wolfgang Nuff, General Commanding the Fifth Infantry Division.

At the same time, in their appeals for "equal status in armament," the various members of the Group were careful to keep to the thesis that only the recog-

dition of their claim could re-establish what the Chancellor called a "unifying and brotherly Occident." The French and the Poles remained sceptical and even the British became alarmed, but it seemed that nothing short of armed invasion could prevent the Germans from succeeding with their task of Treaty revision.

As an adherent of private capitalism and Catholic Christianity, the Chancellor was unquestionably willing to be reconciled with France on the basis of complete Treaty revision, with the somewhat ambitious hope of uniting the Occidental world against Russian Bolshevism. At the same time, by his insistence upon the gold standard and his hostility to the notion of complete economic self-sufficiency which had become popular in some circles, he hoped to keep Germany from deviating too greatly from Occidental norms. The "presidential" cabinet remained European in outlook, while continuing the same economic conflict with the West that had resulted from the unfortunate plan for a customs union with Austria. Revision cost money. It was notable that those who spoke of the necessity of "Germany again starving itself great" seemed well fed, while the beggars in the street and the unemployed in the cheap lodging houses showed little enthusiasm for national emancipation at this price. Papen talked boldly against Marxism while his economic measures steadily produced more Marxians. A symbol of the period was the suppression from circulation of postage stamps with the effigy of the Socialist president, Ebert, and their substitution by others bearing the face of Hindenburg.

The war against Communism was conducted with

a cold severity that filled the prisons with thousands of "politicals."

More and more, although the Social-Democrats shrank from opposing the Group too openly until it should have eliminated National-Socialism completely, the manual workers of Germany, regardless of party, came to view the Group with ever greater suspicion. Hundreds of small strikes proved successful owing to the amazing solidarity of the unemployed with their striking comrades.

More diverting were the achievements of the "presidential" cabinet in the cultural field. Nakedness, both on the bathing beaches and in the nudist clubs, became the object of stern disapproval. The theaters and cabarets were strictly censored. The Chancellor, as Commissioner for Prussia, prescribed the extent and cut of bathing suits. Most of the population met these reforms with unveiled hilarity, but a street walker on the *Friedrichstrasse* in Berlin expressed to me the satisfaction of herself and her professional sisters. The Socialists, she said, with their "free love" and obligatory hygiene had practically ruined an ancient calling. The "gentlemen," she hoped, could be counted on to restore its prestige and prosperity by again placing the professionals under strict supervision, thus driving out the amateurs. "We," she concluded, "unreservedly support the New Government."

Other manifestations of "*Kultur-Bolschewismus*" came equally under the displeasure of the Group. Since, as the Chancellor so nicely opined, "It was the most fundamental error of the Liberal era to have proclaimed unlimited freedom of thought," his bureaucrats set about eliminating symptoms of this

heresy from the broadcasting programs, the theaters and the schools. Patriotism and classics became good business, driving out nearly all of the promising experimentalism that, between 1920 and 1930, had made Germany perhaps the most vital country in the world. Yet a performance of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* was severely criticized by conservatives for the emphasis laid on its revolutionary character—the shooting of a tyrant was not a pleasant subject to the Group! From the monopolized broadcasting stations, bands blared forth stirring military hymns instead of Hindemith, and inspired patriots sought to instill into the hearers Christian virtues like obedience, reverence and patriotism. History was freshly interpreted to show that the *Reichstag* was largely responsible for the defeat of 1918! Not a word of the folly of the generals! Yet the people were, it seemed, not quite ripe for complete conversion; they responded by discontinuing their radio subscriptions in large numbers.

In Thuringia, under a National-Socialist administration, school children once every week staged the following scene. The teacher or a pupil recited aloud: "Hear the article which Germany's enemies thought out in order to shame us forever: 'The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.' "

Whereupon the class answered: "Germany's shame

shall burn in our souls until the day of freedom and honor!"

The fight against "*Kultur-Bolschewismus*," as part of the Cabinet's program of restoring the Christian State, was undertaken in the name of God! Hardly a public speech in which the listeners did not hear from some member of the Group that the Lord was on the side of reaction.

The Jews, though protected from violence, were more or less systematically eliminated from the public administration. Private persons took the hint and a general dismissal of Jews from moving pictures, theaters, newspapers and a good many businesses resulted. (The authorities naturally never forgot that a Jew ceases to be a Jew when his income reaches a certain figure.)

Into its hands, the Group concentrated all available power in all conceivable fields. It governed by Emergency Decrees. It controlled the Army and the Prussian police; it monopolized the broadcasting stations and gagged its opponents; it planned to take over the control of education from the Federal States. It practically put through a new organization of the country by half-merging the great State of Prussia with the central Administration—the so-called "reform of the *Reich*."

Newspapers that ventured to criticize were suppressed for varying periods. The very courts that had formerly failed to see in certain expressions offense against the Weimar Republic, now decided that applied to the President or the Chancellor or the Cabinet, these same expressions called for severe punishment.

This may have been good politics but it was unbelievable jurisprudence.

Yet judicial support for a questionably legal position was by no means all that the Group sought. Its ultimate intention was to equip the country with a brand new Constitution in order to perpetuate authoritative rule.

The monarchists, the reactionaries, the pan-Germanists simply whooped with enthusiasm and daily exhorted the Cabinet to throw over even the forms of constitutional government and rule by naked violence. An important few even demanded the immediate restoration of the monarchy. In no case must Germany return to the hated rule of changing parliamentary majorities! The ancient die-hard Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau promised a Nationalist meeting that he and his friends would "brand the people with a new Constitution that would take away its sight and hearing." But the President, however far he might be willing to stretch the Weimar document, had sworn to defend it. The new Constitution, the Chancellor repeated, would only be applied in the legal way. In other words, the new oligarchy magnanimously placed before the people the alternative: "Support our ideas or we shall continue to govern alone until you do!"

Now most Germans did not object to a modification of the Constitution in the direction of the "American system"; that is, an elected President with a Cabinet independent of the Legislature. But this system implied either making the Legislature independent of the Executive altogether or of giving the President the power to dissolve the Legislature but once: a con-

sultation of the people, must, that is, be absolutely binding upon the President.

This was certainly not the idea that was in the minds of Papen, Gayl and Schleicher. Their idea of reform, as publicly announced, was somewhat as follows:

The electoral age would be raised from twenty to twenty-five years; ex-soldiers and the head of each family would be given a double vote; the President would be elected by the people but neither he nor his Cabinet would be responsible to the Legislature, which would consist of the *Reichstag*, elected by the people but subject to repeated presidential dissolution and a new "upper house" or Senate, to consist of the existing National Council appointed by the States, of representatives of various social levels and professions (*Stände*) and of other distinguished persons appointed for life by the President. This body would have a sort of veto right. It was clear that under such a system, either the Germans would be ruled autocratically by a strong President or they would be ruled bureaucratically in the name of a weak one. Their participation would boil down to shouting "*Ave Caesar*" after a presidential election.

Such a Constitution meant practically turning the German clock back to where it had stood in 1914.

At the same time the Cabinet planned a structural reform whereby all but the three Southern States would be merged with the *Reich*, thus still further strengthening the Central Government.

With such a program, the Group sailed blithely into the *Reichstag* election of November 6, 1932, and

emerged largely victorious. It was a campaign chiefly notable for the comical bitterness between the conservative Nationalists and the National-Socialists. The Group's calculation had been correct; for the first time since 1928 the votes of the National-Socialists fell off, and by no less than two millions. Once again Communists and National-Socialists possessed power to block all legislation and no homogeneous majority could be collected.

How could a nation so divided govern itself? One third of the German voters, the National-Socialists, opposed the "divinely inspired" Group only in the name of a yet more ferocious Fascist reaction. More than a sixth hated it in the name of proletarian dictatorship. Something over a third, the Social-Democrats and Catholics, struggled to preserve self-government, social legislation and a minimum of intellectual tolerance. As Southerners, the Catholics also stood out for States' Rights against advancing centralism. Only a final ninth backed the Group, but largely in the hope that it would install some sort of permanent oligarchy that would lead inevitably to monarchical restoration. What chance was there of eliminating the men who had seized power by what George Washington might conceivably have called usurpation?

As a matter of sober fact, not even the restoration of self-government could promise the end of a reaction which lay, fundamentally, not so much in the conscious intentions of any little group of men, as in the moral and physical dissatisfaction of the German people.

The fact was, at this juncture, that the vast ma-

majority of even highly cultured Germans did not themselves know what they wanted. Moral rehabilitation, a closer social feeling, some measure of Socialism, a stronger central authority, certainly. As to the rest, as to the broader political aims, the organization of the world, the cultural forms that would give them fullest self-expression, they were as much in the dark as the rest of the world.

Between the Germans and their Western neighbors hung also the veil of German dynamism. The nations of the West could discern in Germany no form, no peace, no conviction, no dependability, only a striving for self-satisfaction, a lust for change for its own sake.

A great, a religious people was seeking a faith. A geographically and psychologically shapeless people was seeking an outline. In the task it shrank from no extreme, seemed to eschew no prevarication or folly. The result was a new "particularity" of a type that could obviously prove dangerous. . . .

*Berlin, June–November,
1932*

THE RAPE OF EUROPA

CHAPTER XXIV

GERMANY TURNS THE TABLES

“. . . in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy tempered indeed, and controlled, not so much by general and positive laws, as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valor, of eloquence or superstition.”

GIBBON, *Decline and Fall*.

THE Nazis got into power through the betrayal of the German Republic by President Hindenburg, much as the smaller minority in Italy was let in by King Victor Emmanuel. The struggle had been longer in Germany but there was far less real resistance. (This did not prevent the Nazis from carrying out their *coup d'état* with a wealth of bloodshed and sadism beyond the Italian measure.)

Jobs for partisans (nearly two million changed hands in this greatest of all rackets), death, torture and the concentration camp for opponents, absolute subordination of everyone and everything to one man and one idea, the *Deutschtum*, now reinforced by a racial idea that was a good excuse for mistreating, robbing and exiling the Jews! The Communists, rival fanatics of a rival collectivity, caught it worst at first, but pacifists were almost as brutally suppressed. Religion, the universities, science, art, literature, news-

papers, the radio, became mere tools of the Idol. All freedom of every sort disappeared. Nowhere was any resistance, save in the religious field. Protestants and Catholic reverends, who had been indifferent to democracy or individual rights in politics, suddenly became heroic when boys began suppressing Christian organizations or touching up the Psalms and the Gospels to fit Nazi notions and "lay emphasis on Jesus' relentless fight against the Jewish spirit." A new Paganism and cult of savage Germanic ancestors was moderately encouraged. Day and night, half-truth and falsehood were sprayed and brayed into the ears of the masses. Unlimited public shows took the place of classical "circuses."

Hitler and Goebbels seemed able to make the isolated Germans believe nearly anything they wished. Truth, traditional morality, art, industry, business were pressed into service of the nation as interpreted by the Leader. The rich industrialists whose support had helped Hitler to power soon found themselves elbowed out of the ancient power that went with possession. Just as during the War all nations had had to adopt collectivist economic policies, so now hysterical nationalism turned the German business system into a new sort of military collectivism called "defence economics" (*Wehrwirtschaft*). For integral nationalism demanded Socialism, not through any principle, but because only thus the private interests of all individuals, rich and poor (excepting the Nazi leaders, many of whom became wealthy within a fabulously short time), could be subordinated to the real or presumed interest of the nation. The schools inculcated the glory of armed struggle and proclaimed the

inevitability of War—"a supremely ennobling experience for a healthy and virile nation," thus indicating how leading Nazis interpreted national interest. The new education taught that "common profit comes before private profit."

Dissenters, even in the Party, like Captain Roehm, were murdered or suppressed. The police were given supreme power over all but Hitler's entourage. The extent of police control was revealed when duplicate keys to every dwelling in Berlin had to be turned over to headquarters.

Fascism, called National-Socialism in Germany, is not only a clever device for enslaving a people; it is a collective religion. The individuals cease to exist: the hive counts more than the bees—not the physical hive, the metaphysical hive—the nation considered as a lasting reality rather than as a historical accident. This is nationalism in its ultimate spasm. Everyone, from top to bottom, even the Leader, must serve the idea, serve not as a volunteer freely assenting, but as part and parcel of it. Dissent becomes "impossible," heresy a destructive disease, obedience the greatest virtue. Therefore the insistence on discipline. Therefore the process of *Gleichschaltung* or turning all feet in the same direction. The aim is the greatness of the nation conceived as crude expansion. The Fascist does not think: he feels. And he feels that nothing is worth while but to win in an endless (perhaps ultimately aimless) striving of national groups to devour each other. In the Fascist theory each nation plays to win, gives no quarter and talks peace only as a blind to deceive an adversary. Politics becomes national biology.

There was plenty of nationalism in the world before Mussolini and Hitler. Most of it came from Germany. Machiavelli, to be sure, first formulated the doctrine—Mazzini added a little idealism, Sorel, Mosca and Pareto the joy in violence, Maurras a sacerdotal note, but the deification of the notion of the State began in Germany. Before the War, Europeans as Christians possessed immortal souls, and therefore individual value. As men they shared general conceptions with other men on the same intellectual level. It took the brutalization and disillusion of the War to do away with all that. Collectivism in the form of Socialism had ripened and spread. Lenin, schooled by Marx and fortified by Sorel, seized power and instituted collectivism in Russia.

This conceived society as a kind of army “temporarily” mobilized to achieve a glorious end. To Lenin this end was world revolution and Communism.

Clever Fascists realized that the important thing in Russia was not the aim but the technique. Here finally was the weapon to produce and maintain a society with all the effective cohesion of the ant hill, and direct it to any aim one might choose.

At first this suppression of individual thought and emotion might seem to go against human nature. But on the subconscious level it was far more simple. The trick was to appeal continuously and solely to the subconscious. This was the task of the new propaganda. By isolation, repetition and complete disregard for what is called objective truth, it proved as easy to sell political theories to the less developed as to sell pink pellets or blue razor blades. Once you caught and militarized the mass under one party of conscious

adherents, terror would do the rest (see *The Fascist*, by E. B. Ashton).

The essence of it all was bluntly revealed by the Party "intellectual," Alfred Rosenberg, in his pompous *Myth of the Twentieth Century*: "All plans [*Schemen*], systems of thought and values are, in our eyes, only means for strengthening the vital struggle of the German people against the outside world."

Almost immediately there was cemented an alliance with the Army, the one body the Nazis at first kept their hands off.

Under the Republic and with its connivance the German Reichswehr had carried on a steady policy of clandestine rearmament.

In 1931 a certain number of soldiers and officers went over definitely to Hitler while the official leaders gave him constant if secret encouragement. In 1932, under the influence of President Hindenburg, the Army carried out the illegal "rape of Prussia." In 1933 it watched passively while Hindenburg handed over to Hitler the Republic he had sworn to defend. It backed the Fuehrer in his various steps towards full German rearmament, and insisted on the national sacrifices inherent in the first Four Year Plan to make Germany "equal" and the second Four Year Plan to make Germany able to sustain a long war. At a certain moment the Generals, admittedly, began to demur at the risks Adolf Hitler so blithely ran, and ask if not more moderation, at least more prudence. The military were not all adherents of the new doctrine and many officers resented the "proletarian atmosphere" Hitler had tried to introduce. There was even a non-Nazi organization, the *Soldatenbund*,

with many adherents which resisted Party control. But there was little possibility that, were a favorable chance to strike a blow for German expansion to arise, the Reichswehr would prevent the government from seizing it.

Under a system that centered all authority at the top, the state of mind of the masses was not easily ascertainable. Short of profound discontent or active revolt, it did not, however, much matter. For the skeleton was the Nazi Party. Here fidelity was insured not only by patient indoctrination but by the application of the spoils system on a scale unknown anywhere else. While the leaders on top brought to their task an unscrupulous energy that paralyzed opponents, the secondary chiefs were for the most part converts or third-raters. National-Socialism meant to them primarily an opportunity to obtain through fidelity and violence positions of distinction and profit they had not achieved under free competition. For these exalted *Kleinbuerger*, collapse of the régime would mean loss of everything, even of life itself. The beneficiaries of the two million jobs could therefore be counted upon for firm support. Only in the rarest circumstances did they have anything much to say about national policy.

The new dictators claimed that they alone represented the nation, not indeed in its millions of ephemeral individuals, but in its immanent and permanent will.

Individuals conditioned to purely collective response by repetition of slogans, hatred of "foreign enemies" and continual din of tom-toms, ought theoretically to cease altogether to think individually—

and many did. In the interim Reichswehr and police and Propaganda Minister watched the population like lynxes and no green bananas ripening in the hold of a tropical steamer were ever more frequently tested for temperature than the German peasants and workmen for their reactions to the treatment.

Testing was, however, one thing; deferring to, quite another. When innocent foreigners (and all foreigners from individualistic societies were, without special study of the new collectivisms, inevitably innocent) deprecated any talk of danger on the ground that "surely the German people do not want war," they but played into the hands of the régime. Whatever, in the absence of any accurate information, the supposed attitude of the German masses toward a declaration of war by the Leader, it was certain that their opinion would not be asked by him. The fate of Europe was increasingly concentrated in the hands of three or four Germans.

Adolf Hitler's heavy rather feminine body, with its sloping shoulders and soft flesh, his passion for rhetoric, his frequent fits of weeping, his incredible tenacity of purpose, his belief in his inspired rôle, his lack of any deeper than national feelings—these have been sufficiently described.

His political opinions were clumsily yet plainly delineated in his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*.

There is not the slightest evidence that he ever deviated from any of them. Rather must one marvel at the supreme and successful audacity of the house-painter prophet, setting out at a moment of his Party's greatest weakness, to outline its coming rise

to supreme power—and seeing some of his outline realized.

What was the guiding notion? Simply the glorification of the national ant hill, its expansion to a nation of 250 millions. Like Carlyle, Hitler loathed democracy and worshipped heroism. Unlike the Scotsman, he understood the necessity of duping (or doping) the mass into active consensus. His notes on propaganda are his wisest words and perhaps contain the key to a century of struggle. His political plan was terribly simple. Every internal issue was to be decided on whether or not it would strengthen the nation's striking power abroad. Germany was first to rearm—by any means and at any cost. Thereby it would make itself "fit for alliances," for without alliances even German heroes would have some difficulty in bossing Europe. "An alliance whose aim does not include the intention of making war is senseless and worthless," he wrote. Once strong and rearmed, Germany should seek and win the alliance of Great Britain and Italy. Secure in these it could call France to account: France, "the enemy of the white race in Europe," must be destroyed. Not for any pleasure in destruction, but to get rid of the champion of the *status quo* and open the gates for German dominion. Expansion would follow in three steps: the reconquest of the territory lost in 1918; the union of all Teutonic Aryans in Europe under German leadership; the seizing of new lands in the East and Southeast, into which the German population could migrate and multiply. This implied the end of Poland and the division of Soviet Russia. For Germany would "either be a world Power or cease to be." These splendid

things could not be accomplished by prayers to God or pious hopes in a League of Nations, but "only through armed violence."

If, after the author of this explicit plan had become the leader of his people, foreign statesmen still continued to ask timidly "what Germany really wanted," it was not Hitler's fault. He at least had not been lacking in precision. Even when he spoke abroad of "peace" while preaching preparations for war at home, he was but fulfilling the demands of his own rules on successful propaganda: never tell a little lie; tell a lie so big that people simply cannot believe that you are lying!

Not for nothing—not even for Hitler's pocketbook—was reading of *Mein Kampf* made obligatory for all Germans; not vainly did he for several years prevent an unabridged edition from coming before the public in France.

Concerning Hermann Goering and Paul Joseph Goebbels, little need be said save that they represented respectively the two pillars of the Nazi State, violence and indoctrination, so successfully synthesized in Hitler. Goering, a former Prussian officer, aviator, and one time drug fiend, stood for naked violence, the more the better. Goebbels, the wizened orator with the club foot, impersonated the art of political salesmanship at its highest. A failure as writer and journalist, Goebbels developed a very genius for that mixture of cynicism and guile upon which the Third Reich had to lean so heavily.

Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, Reichsmark manipulator and chief "fixer" of the Reich's foreign creditors, deserves comment for other reasons. First,

he was not a Nazi at all but an unlimitedly ambitious individualist; second, without his sheer magic in financing armament on a shoestring and conjuring up export trade for Germany in a falling market, the régime might have collapsed. It would be a pity if the world ever forgot that this long-necked banker began political life as a democrat, evolved into conservatism just when the Republic began to fail, hooked on to Hitler just in time to ride into history as the financier of the world's greatest conspiracy, *Wehrwirtschaft*.

"National Socialism will break open the gates of eternity. You, our Fuehrer, walk among your people as their Redeemer. *You teach the youth of the country to die for the Reich.*"

This was chanted over the ether by a chorus of lusty German guardsmen early in 1937. Why should they not be proud of their Leader? In 1933 he promised them deliverance from the yoke of Versailles. By 1937 he had kept his word. Germany had put nearly everyone to work (unfortunately at near starvation wages). Germany had slammed the door of the Disarmament Conference and pulled out of the democratic League of Nations. Germany had created a giant new army based on universal conscription and was well along in the process of equipping it properly. German soldiers had re-entered the demilitarized Rhineland, thereby reducing the French military scope in Europe by about half. Germany had repudiated the internationalization of its rivers and cast off the "war guilt clause." Germany was rebuilding a fair-sized fleet in full agreement with Great Britain. Germany had won a working partnership with Italy, had virtually re-seized Danzig with the tacit co-opera-

tion of Poland, had frightened the Lithuanians into giving more rights to the Germans in Memel. Germany seemed well on the way toward assuring the establishment of a Fascist régime in Spain. Germany had connived at the murder of the recalcitrant Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss and wrung greater rights for Nazis from his successor, Schuschnigg. Germany had detached Belgium from the Locarno countries, negotiated as an equal with Great Britain, bluffed France to a standstill. Germany had, if not broken, at least loosened the bonds of the Little Entente and was becoming the predominant commercial figure in the Balkans. By shouting for colonies, Germany was creating a nuisance value every day more precious. In short, Germany was well on the way to rebecoming what it had been in 1914, the center of European unrest. And all this without shedding a single drop of any but German blood.

A brief calendar of the first five years of Hitler reads like a hymn of victory from a Prussian historian or war poet:

1933 January: Adolf Hitler Chancellor.

February: The Reichstag fire enables the Nazis to assume full power in Germany. French Premier Daladier accepts the (later unratified) Four Power Pact which excludes France's allies from the direction of European affairs. The Poles particularly take offence.

October: Germany withdraws from the Disarmament Conference and serves notice it intends to quit the League of Nations.

There are no reprisals. Germany begins openly to rearm.

A Polish offer to crush Nazi Germany in the egg is refused by France.

1934 Spring: Poland signs a non-aggression treaty with Germany, thereby lending support to the Nazis in Danzig.

June 30: Hitler eliminates Nazi dissenters in Germany by murder. Austrian Nazis murder Chancellor Dollfuss with the knowledge of the Reich.

1935 January: Germany wins the Saar plebiscite by an overwhelming vote after French Premier Laval has stopped all aid to anti-Nazis.

Laval gives Mussolini a free hand, economically, in Ethiopia.

March: Hitler publicly repudiates the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty and institutes conscription. Britain and Germany tear up the naval clauses of the treaty and make a special arrangement.

At Stresa, Italy, Britain and France agree to maintain a common front against Germany—which lasts about two weeks.

September: Italy, encouraged by Germany's methods and success, invades Ethiopia in violation of the League Covenant and is not expelled by the League of Nations.

Britain offers sanctions which Laval accepts only after allowing Mussolini to get a good start. British conservatives win in a general election by promising

collective security and then apply sanctions feebly, half-heartedly and ineffectively.

1936 March: Germany breaks the Locarno Pacts (created to protect Germany against France) by moving troops into the demilitarized Rhineland. France falters and looks to Britain for the promised support. Britain refuses to honor its signature.

Summer: Sanctions against Italy are lifted and the League collapses. Arthur Greiser, Nazi President of the Danzig Senate, thumbs his nose at the League.

Under Italian pressure, Austria makes new concessions to Germany.

Germany and Italy connive at a rebellion against the Spanish Republic, by Spanish generals allegedly financed by British bankers. They openly support the cause of Fascism with men and war material. Great Britain blackmails France into proclaiming "neutrality," and both strive feebly to secure general non-intervention. Only Soviet Russia officially assists the Spanish Republicans.

August: Belgium decides to desert the Western Powers and seek neutrality without promising anything, thereby shortening the Franco-German line.

October: Germany and Italy agree at Berchtesgaden on "a common Policy."

December: Britain prevents Spain from bringing the German and Italian intervention in Spain before the League of Nations.

1936-1937 Winter: Hitler stamps on the rest of the Versailles Treaty.

1937 January: Premier Blum warns the Germans to keep out of Spanish Morocco.

Germany and Italy announce common action along the "Rome-Berlin Axis" created at Berchtesgaden which amounts to an alliance against democracy and Communism. Despite repeated verbal adherence to "non-intervention" they block any action that would effectively prevent further aid to the Spanish Fascists.

Jan.-Dec.: The tragi-farce of non-intervention continues to the detriment of the legitimate Spanish government.

The reversal in Germany's position was so complete that with all allowances for Hitler's daring and energy, it could only have come about through an amazing combination of circumstances. In considering the rise to dominion of a Germany trained to conquest, future historians are bound to ask why did not the democratic Powers either crush Hitler, as the realist Pilsudski proposed, or at least nullify his every move?

The reasons were complicated. In the first place, to the British and French peoples, the Great War had been a horrid example. They felt themselves profoundly pacifist. A preventive war was outside their psychological field of possibilities.

In the second place, both peoples had largely let themselves be convinced by Socialist and German propaganda that the Treaty of Versailles was a flat failure. The Conservatives more or less regretted that

Germany had not been knocked out, the Liberals and Socialists that the Weimar Republic had not been treated like the Prodigal Son.

Nor did the intellectual disarray that brought Germany to Hitler spare the rest of the Occident. The Western world seemed to lapse into passive nihilism or exasperated despair. Participation in the late War became a pretext for mockery.

Britishers relished the blatant admiration vouchsafed them by the Germans and much resented the French persistence in finding Britain and things British pre-eminently "*comiques*." This being the case, it was not strange that long after honest British leaders realized that the Germans were up to mischief, the mass of Britons shrank from any renewed co-operation with the "immoral" French, especially if such co-operation seemed to spell a fight.

Moreover, it is clear that neither British nor French were able or desired to grasp the depth of the German revolt against Occidental civilization or the danger that lay in it. Hitler's moustache made it hard to take him seriously. A collectivist mission to spread the *Deutschtum* seemed to them so childish that they suspected it was merely the cover for some sort of concrete ambition which could be satisfied by honest compromise. Years went by before they grasped—and then only partially—that the reason why Hitler would not commit himself to a list of definite claims which might be met, was that for him the limit was the sky.

The German aims were, it must be remembered, a serial story. The first was the recovery of "equality," so that Germany would be *buendnisfaehig*. This had been begun by the Republicans and was accomplished

by the Nazis without arousing any dangerous reaction. Contracting the proposed alliances with Britain and Italy was more of a problem. No Italian statesman could really concur in German dominion of the Continent. The Duce had no ambition for a secondary rôle. But in any practical grab the two dictators were born allies. Hitler's aims were so vast that he could not realize them all at once without starting too many hares. Expansion demanded temporary sacrifices. The first was the agreement with Poland—a purely defensive move occasioned by the Polish offer to France to help crush National-Socialism before it got started. To forestall a second and possibly acceptable Polish offer, Hitler swallowed his hatred of what he called "Slavic sub-humans" and concluded with Joseph Pilsudski and Joseph Beck a non-aggression or good-will treaty that gave the Poles a free hand in ousting or Germanizing the Teutons in Posnania and in the Corridor.

Fortified by this agreement, Hitler set about bullying the Austrians into accepting National-Socialism and the *Anschluss*. In the process, Berlin-inspired Austrian Nazis murdered Chancellor Dollfuss. But in 1934 Mussolini leaped to the assistance of Austria, and Berlin gave way. Meanwhile a campaign of intimidation and calumny was launched against Czechoslovakia; and the German-speaking inhabitants there were, so far as possible, organized into a single quasi-Nazi Party under Konrad Henlein. The Czechs, best-led people in Europe, stood their ground, rearmed to the teeth, solidified their alliance with France, achieved an agreement with Soviet Russia, sought the

comprehension of Britain, tried to widen the Little Entente, and smiled.

Finally, in the spring of 1936, when League resistance to Italy had collapsed, Hermann Goering bluntly asked the Poles to participate in a military campaign against Soviet Russia for which Hitler had long been preparing the world by his hysterical screaming against Communism. Poland refused.

It was a blow for Germany. Hitler's political intuition had hitherto proved unerring. But here something was wrong: the policy demanded reconsideration. Why did a dwarf State like Czechoslovakia have the courage to defy the mighty Germany? Why could Poland play see-saw between the Soviets and the Third Reich? How could Joseph Stalin dare calmly to defy the new Reichswehr? Because all three had behind them the French army. As a boxer this army unquestionably carried less weight than the German army, but no one could question that it had the punch. The moral was, there was no short cut to German domination. The path to German expansions even in the East was blocked by France. Hitler had been right when he wrote *Mein Kampf*. To affront France and its allies, Germany must have allies—Italy and Great Britain, just as he had written. In the autumn of 1936, Germany and Italy reached a four-point agreement: to respect the independence of Austria, to maintain a common front against Communism, to act together in the matter of a new Locarno Pact, to take common action in Spain.

The purpose of all this was from the German viewpoint double: primarily the isolation of France, or

leastwise its separation from Great Britain; for this purpose, the supplanting of the collective system (mutual assistance under the League Covenant or special treaties against an aggressor) by a series of bi-lateral treaties without sanctions. The motive was so transparent that none were deceived. For with the possible exception of the British Empire (if it could still be mobilized as a unit) Germany felt itself the strongest Power in Europe. The United States were remote, unmilitary, self-absorbed—and disinterested. By preventing a common front between the intended victims (called enemies) Germany might hope to take them on one at a time. By this system Prussia had in a few years successfully wrested territories from Denmark, Austria and France. Then the way would be clear for action—against France if Britain would consent; if not, against those Slavic “sub-peoples,” Poland, Russia and Czechoslovakia, whose territories were necessary to the coming Greater Germany.

Meanwhile the uniting of the European Germans could be prepared by propaganda. The Nazis were not very effective diplomats. But as propagandists they were remarkable. Their system was successful by its very simplicity: deny abroad everything that you encourage at home: accuse your enemy of doing just what you intend to do; find effective slogans, repeat them a thousand times. For a long time Hitler was able to convince quite intelligent people that Germany was suppressing its pacifists and rearming “for peace.” Thanks to his iterated hymns to the pure Nordics (six per cent of the German people—if there be a Nordic type) he made a certain number of converts everywhere. For a time his anti-Bolshevism

fascinated Finland. German generals made plans for seizing Swedish iron and arsenic deposits and occupying Swedish islands in case of war. Thereby they frightened the Danes into granting them one-sided trade concessions which were an obstacle to the formation of a Nordic "trade-bloc," which Germany hated.

Clever Germans aided in stampeding the democratic Swiss into anti-Communist jitters. German propaganda among the ignorant Flemings persuaded them that France contemplated an invasion of Flanders. German encouragement aided the birth of Rex, the Belgian Fascist movement under Léon Degrelle. As a result Belgium half detached itself from the Franco-British group that alone could save Belgium from a new German invasion. There was not the slightest reason to believe that Adolf Hitler would go further than Bethmann-Hollweg in respecting a "scrap of paper." But some Belgians managed to believe it. German diplomacy managed to convince conceited Poles that Poland would lose nothing by not opposing the nazification of the Free City of Danzig, which the League of Nations had in an access of cowardice abandoned. According to Henlein the Germans of Bohemia felt themselves "outposts of the great German people."¹

Nazi agents fomented insurrection in the little Baltic States and intrigued against Russia. Hitler painted a brilliant picture of the prosperity that might be Germany's if only that country possessed "the Ukraine, Siberia and the Urals." Had not the Ukraine been founded by "Nordics"? German diplomats hobnobbed with Iron Guard Fascist killers in Roumania

¹ *Jahrbuch des V.D.A.* Berlin, 1935.

and were caught in red-handed intrigue in Hungary. German agents intrigued against France in Turkey and circulated an Arabic translation of *Mein Kampf* in Morocco.

Every agreement the Nazis made, financial, political or religious, was broken at their earliest convenience, which did not in the least hinder them from proposing ever new agreements, and finding new dupes willing to accept.

More audaciously still, the Nazis constituted a special "Foreign Department" in the Foreign Ministry for the avowed purpose of supervising and nazifying the "twelve million Germans abroad." This organization of over six hundred groups abroad was an immense prolongation of the more or less undercover work of the same type that had constantly been done by the V.D.A. (*Verein fuer das Deutschtum im Auslande*) under the Weimar Republic.

Letters from the seat of the V.D.A. were openly postmarked "Stuttgart, capital of Germanism Abroad."¹

Even in the United States, a country whose powerful democracy the Nazis particularly hated, they methodically organized thousands of Germans and German-Americans into anti-Semitic bands, procured the indispensable colored shirts, and trained their converts to overthrow the Republic of Thomas Paine, Jefferson and Lincoln. All in all, an amazing record for people whose aim was the conscious elimination

¹ V.D.A. school maps for 1935 showed Holland, Flanders, Luxemburg and Switzerland as German *Vorlaende*, with Nancy, Longwy and Namur called "old German Imperial territories"—and renamed: Nanzig, Longich and Names respectively.

of most that the inhabitants of the other countries held dear.

The Spanish civil war seemed a heaven-sent opportunity. Here was a chance to subdue France, for "a strong sea Power, which separates France from its colonies, can impose its will on France." While Britain hurriedly modified diplomatic practice in favor of the Spanish Fascists, and democratic France meekly organized a "non-intervention" policy that deprived the legitimate government of its rights, Germany and Italy gaily shipped off large contingents of soldiers (camouflaged as volunteers) and war material to General Franco, who paid them generously from mines belonging to Englishmen. Russia imitated them on a diminutive scale, but France interfered to prevent the Russians from escorting to the Spanish government those munition ships which the Spanish rebel fleet, assisted by German and Italian warships, seized wholesale. Only war material from Soviet Russia and the unexpected arrival of real volunteers from all countries to help the government prevented General Franco from winning in a few months.

Emboldened by their success here (the world accepted the theory that intervention in favor of the Spanish rebels by Fascist States was right and proper but that the same thing to help the loyal government on the part of the democracies would be a rash acceptance of war-risk) the Germans launched into a vast campaign to demand the return of their "stolen colonies." Now these colonies were "stolen" about as much as Prussia "stole" the Rhineland after the Napoleonic wars, or Hanover in 1866. The Germans wanted them back, first, because they had lost them

and prestige demanded the complete reversal of the 1919 settlement; second, because they contained raw stuffs which could not be so conveniently purchased with German marks; third, because they offered interesting bases from which war could be carried into enemy colonies in case of trouble; but most of all, because they were a touchstone of the system whereby Hitler needed but to rearm and shout for his "nuisance value" (threat of war) to make itself successfully felt. Yet this time the blackmail system failed to work. When the German Ambassador in London demanded colonies back from Great Britain, he was politely told to jump into the North Sea. Whereupon, although he went home and publicly announced that Germany would retake its colonies—"by force," the world realized that for once the democratic worm had turned.

The explanation lay in Great Britain. There were of course Frenchmen who accepted the idea of an impoverished and satellite France provided only its democracy could be destroyed. But they were a minority. The majority, educated by Hitler, had gradually opened their eyes. They could unfortunately do little without Britain. British public opinion remained pro-German (or distinctly anti-French) until well along in 1936. When, in March of that year, Germany crudely violated the Locarno Treaties and France feebly threatened to react, British opinion turned upon that country with fear and fury. Had Germany meant peace and quiet, it could at any moment have had Britain's co-operation for the asking. But Britain dared not tolerate German expansion in the West and told Germany so. True to national

tradition, the German leaders neglected the warning and misinterpreted the situation.

How could British democracy mean business when, according to the Fascist theories, all democracies were seamed with rot? That German arrogance might conceivably produce the miracle of a second American intervention to curb it, surpassed Teutonic understanding. They continued to "demand." They played their "nuisance value" to its fullest extent. They set about becoming what one American commentator called "an international pain in the neck." Yet when suddenly the patient threatened to have recourse to surgery, they denounced "democratic aggression" and "encirclement." Germany was encircled only in the sense in which a volunteer bucket brigade encircles a burning oil tank from which an explosion can at any moment be expected.

The change in British attitude was best announced by the British financial monthly, *The Banker*, in a number (February, 1937) specially dedicated to Germany. The article started with the statement that the German political leaders were "prepared to gamble with the lives of their people" but that their threat to peace was in process of "creating a real League of free nations." It delineated every phase of policy in Hitler Germany, studied the enslavement of public opinion and the Press, analyzed industry and agriculture, noted the failure of the latter to make Germany self-supporting, calculated the amount wrung from the masses for rearmament, noted the increasing dominion of the army—"now as ever . . . the real trustee of the German nation"—defined the foreign policy as "blackmail" since Germany had no hope of beating

a great coalition of Powers and could fight only a very short "smash and grab" war, and ended with the injunction that England must under no circumstances yield to the "gangster tyranny that has forced Europe to become an armed or rapidly arming camp. Knowing as Britain does, that peace and Nazi methods go ill together, we should make no concessions to a country dominated by men who worship force and have shown no hesitation in using murder as an instrument of domestic and foreign policy."

These were strong words. They were accompanied by stronger deeds. At approximately the same time, the British Parliament voted a four-year, one-and-a-half-billion-pound rearmament programme intended to make Britain the strongest existing European Power.

In the course of preparing to expand by threat or use of armed force—in other words, in becoming a Fascist State—Germany had ceased to be capitalistic. It had to, to save itself from economic collapse. A Socialistic State can escape formal bankruptcy. Socialism in Nazi Germany was not the result of any deliberate planning or choice—the Nazis claimed to prefer capitalism—it simply developed logically from extreme nationalism. *Wehrwirtschaft* is the corollary of total permanent mobilization, a means for passing, with a minimum of shock, into a war in which Germany would strike quickly and force an immediate issue, in the meantime living on its own produce and within the resources of accumulated stocks. *Wehrwirtschaft* was the reason for the attempt at economic self-sufficiency. The price of *Wehrwirtschaft* was given by *The Banker*: "the supercession of private

initiative by State control, the rapid depletion of resources inherited from the past, together with a slow but steady decline in the standard of living of the population and a growing economic isolation from the rest of the world."

Translated into figures, this meant that in their first four years the Nazis had raised the taxes to approximately one fourth of the national income, while lowering the general standard of nourishment by about twenty per cent. What difference did this make if *Wehrwirtschaft* could succeed in bringing Germany to the top? But *Wehrwirtschaft* did not succeed. It failed just where it was most important that it should not: in the field of agriculture. At the end of four years the Germans were as much dependent upon foreign food imports as at the beginning and, in case of complete isolation during war, could be starved by one bad harvest. For the Nazi policy of small inalienable peasant holdings, intended to preserve the serf mentality desired, prevented any great increase in the production of basic edible grains. Such an increase demanded large-scale production either by the *Junkers* or, as in Russia, by the State.

All the more reason for making the war short. With Britain alarmed and rearming on a scale the Germans simply could not meet, the best chance was to strike quickly before Britain was ready. Most students in 1936 expected Germany to strike in the course of 1937. A brief offensive, motorized columns crashing through Czech defenses, Nazis welcomed by Hungarians as liberators, sweeping on through grain and oil-producing Roumania even into the Ukraine, accompanied by a Nazi insurrection in Austria; France

immobilized within its own frontiers, Britain angry but unwilling to hazard its precious warships—"H.M.S. Unriskables"—this was the nightmare of civilized Europeans.

But down around Madrid things were happening which showed not only that the Germans had miscalculated but with them most of the world's military experts. German war material proved with one exception to be inferior to that of the other major Powers. Tanks proved to be an overrated weapon, air duels difficult, bombing distinctly inaccurate and less harmful than supposed. One might almost say that resolute and well-equipped infantry in properly prepared trenches could block practically any attack—as they did for four years during the Great War. If the lesson was well read, then no aggressive war could be short and successful unless the enemy was either weak or napping—an unlikely contingency in the badly scared Europe of 1937. Colonel Thomas, Chief of Staff of the German Supply Department, was quick to catch on, and set about freeing the Germans from any idea that a coming war "need be short." He also sought to relieve his public from the thought that it was necessarily "so dreadful," for, he said, after so much bombardment, Madrid was still standing. Followed a warning that a "war begun with bread cards and turnips is already lost."¹

The logical conclusion of all this was that an immediate war held small chance of success for Germany. The country's army was still imperfect. The military cadres were insufficient. Officers mocked the

¹See his speech on *Kriegsfuehrung und Wirtschaft in der Geschichte*, February, 1937.

Nazi Party; non-commissioned officers, while hating their superiors for restoring a semi-caste system that made it difficult to rise from the ranks, reserved their worst treatment for recruits "from the Party." The technicians claimed that with the decline of education under the régime, competent officers became harder to find. For Fascism, as the Italian ex-philosopher Giovanni Gentile said, is an art and a religion and necessarily opposed to science. The German army officers saw nothing in the conduct of Italian officers under fire—at least not in Spain—to encourage them to let down their demands for technical training. No, clearly, if a sudden "smash and grab" would not do the trick, Germany must make its preparations for a long war. Reserves of food and raw stuffs could not be sufficiently accumulated under Nazi principles. Therefore in the long run the problem was whether or not the complete abandonment of the international solidarity was, in Germany, compatible with the preparation and winning of a long war against richer, equally competent peoples. In any case the opening of hostilities must be postponed.

Here the real difficulty began, a difficulty more apparent to the financial men and politicians than to the army: Could Germany keep up with the Western nations in an armaments race? Would not Great Britain and France inevitably outdistance Germany? In the meantime the country was gradually driving down its living standard. In the course of some years the bottom would be reached. Then something would have to be done. Would not any abandonment of the race result in the conquest or dismemberment of the Fatherland? Fascism is simply nationalism at its

highest logical potential. A Fascist finds it difficult to believe that if the Western democracies could destroy Germany, which was arming to destroy them, they would not do so. To "dogmatically indivisible bodies" (nations, in the Fascist view) war was both imminent and acceptable. Therefore the continuance of Fascism made a coming war inevitable. A Fascist State could not be a serious factor in any system of collective security. As perhaps the keenest analyst of Fascism¹ puts it:

"That under any circumstances the present Fascist nations will seek to expand, failing to succeed in peace, will attempt to expand by force, and, being repulsed once, will try again and again until they either succeed or cease to be Fascist nations—that is a course of events with all the inexorability of a law of nations."

If once the non-Fascist States realized that peace could not be bought by concessions, economic or other, Fascism would have to fight or get out. If the line-up was such that Germany or Italy or the two together (natural opponents though they be) could not logically win, then they had to hold on for a better moment, or give in. But Germany could not wait. Any abandonment of the rearmament programme involved an increase of unemployment staggering to the régime. Nazi Germany must make good or disappear.

Now there was no scientific basis for nationalism of the Fascist variety—no justification for racial non-senses, anti-Semitism, hypostasis of the nation or Im-

¹ E. B. Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and His Mind*. Morrow: New York, 1937.

perial itch. In the dwindling Europe of 1937 nationalism of any kind was a dangerous anachronism which might wreck but could not conceivably preserve the Continent. Given freedom of choice in a free atmosphere even the Germans would unquestionably prefer peace to war.

The chief problem of Europe was therefore how to avoid war by bringing about the downfall of Fascism in its Nazi and other varieties. Communism had shown that it could cease to be expansive: Fascism must expand or die. Germany and Italy revealed their nervousness by extending their "anti-Communist racket to Japan, even at considerable sacrifice of real interests in China."

By the early summer of 1937 the ways of expansion open to Fascism seemed pretty well blocked. All that remained to do was to tighten the links among the democracies, prevent a Franco (meaning an Italo-German) victory in Spain, continue rearmament on a vast scale and wait until the explosive forces in Germany and Italy, blocked on all sides, should turn inwards and rid the world of the new barbarians.

But just at this moment an accident occurred, a new piece of luck in the incredible series that had accompanied the rise of the dictators. The dull but canny Prime Minister of Great Britain, Stanley Baldwin, resigned and was succeeded by Neville Chamberlain. Baldwin and his Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, had leaned over backwards "to be fair to the dictators" and had powerfully contributed to wrecking the Versailles (or "French") Continental System. Both had learned by sad experience that alas, the Fas-

cist régimes were interested, not in preserving the peace but in provoking a chaos in which the political fishing might be favorable for dictatorships.

The new Prime Minister had not been a shining success as an administrator during the Great War, but he was an honest bookkeeper and trusted by the London City. He brought to his new task an innocence of international affairs rarely matched outside the governing circles of the United States. The "new deals" in the big democracies, France and the United States, were obnoxious to him, and he was alleged to have referred to Franklin D. Roosevelt as "that Red in the White House." Alarmed, furthermore, by the—to him unexpected—Japanese attack on China (alarmed, that is, for British privileges in the Far East, not for Chinese integrity), an aggression which was the logical result of the extension of the "Rome-Berlin Axis" to Tokyo, he set about trying, in the good old British way, to detach one portion of the "Axis" by bribery. This game had generally worked in the past, but times and techniques had changed. Any American ward boss could have told the new Prime Minister that there are only two ways to break up a successful racket: the application of police force ("shoot to kill"), or making it unprofitable. Bribery, to have been successful with Italy, would have had to be on a gigantic scale: Great Britain would, namely, have had to offer one of the racketeers something at least as attractive as he could hope to obtain otherwise. To imagine this possible was to ignore the size of Italian and German ambitions.

But with Italy aiming at virtual dominion of the Mediterranean and Germany at that of Continental

Europe (both at the expense of France and Great Britain), Chamberlain's petty offers of "friendship and international reconciliation" were posies to a florist. The substance was insignificant while the offer itself revealed to the dictators the possibilities that still lay in the racket. Chamberlain's efforts to "negotiate" with Italy promoted the new Italo-German agreement of September 1937, whereby Italy sacrificed the independence of Austria to Germany in return for full German support in Spain and other coveted regions around the Mediterranean. Austrian independence was a heavy price for Mussolini to pay; but with his country on the verge of internal collapse, he had shortly to show profits or renounce his aim of territorial expansion. To have done this would have been to admit that Fascism, a régime primarily to promote national expansion, had failed. As might have been expected, Benito Mussolini, with his contempt for democracy, therefore paid the price demanded by Germany and carried on the war for the conquest of Spain with renewed vigor, meanwhile continuing to dupe Chamberlain and his ambassador in Rome, Lord Perth, by vague promises of coming understandings.

Not surprisingly Anglo-Italian negotiations failed, however, to advance. Towards the end of the year, after the Far Eastern Conference at Brussels in November failed to get anywhere, Chamberlain, under the influence of a number of Germanophile aristocrats called the "Cliveden set" after the country home of one of them, proceeded to send Lord Halifax to Berlin to see what could be done to detach another section of the "Axis" by some sort of bribe (called, in British official parlance, "satisfying legitimate as-

pirations and desires," although Germany had long since more than recovered "*Gleichberechtigung*"). Then, if ever, the time had come for ceasing the futile and dangerous wooing of the European racketeers. But Chamberlain thought otherwise. At the cost of losing his Foreign Minister, whose honest British eyes had been opened by sad experience, he persisted in trying to beg from the Italians (he called it "negotiating") a sort of promise not to keep any part of conquered Spain or otherwise harm British Imperial interests in the Mediterranean or the Moslem world.

Thereby he opened the door on European catastrophe and a new World War. Not without warning. A few days before Eden's resignation, Adolf Hitler "purified" the German army of a certain number of higher officers refractory to certain of his aims. These were: first, the prosecution of the German *Wehrwirtschaft* (war economics) to a point approaching permanent Communism; second, the unconditional support of Italy in Spain and elsewhere; third, immediate steps towards the annexation of Austria. The German Fuehrer, more than ever convinced that he had been "sent by God to unite the German tribe" (the words are his own), got rid of the dissenters and then, after a carefully prepared prelude, proceeded to invade and annex Austria under the frightened eyes of all Europe. It was a terrific blow and it nearly split the British Conservative Party, already badly damaged by Eden's enforced departure. France, though torn by internal dissension, weakened by chronic financial diabetes and still drugged by a pacifism equal to Chamberlain's own, tried at the last moment unsuccessfully to secure British aid in saving Austria.

Chamberlain and Halifax, who had happily chosen the day of Austria's doom for a friendly luncheon with Joachim von Ribbentrop, the returning German Ambassador, were staggered but stubbornly stuck to their error. To admit that they were wrong might have been to save democracy and the British Empire without fighting. But what did these weigh beside the danger to the British ruling class inherent in the decay of the Conservative Party in Great Britain and the conceivable emergence in Spain, Italy and even Germany of Popular Front democracies of a kind British Tories persist in calling "Red"? Seeing Britain's persistence in "negotiating" with Italy, the country that had so recently sold Austria to Germany in exchange for dominion of the Mediterranean (newly arrived German and Italian airplanes were leading a new Franco drive against the unhappy Spanish Republic), Poland presented an ultimatum to Lithuania to compel the latter to recognize the former's right to the stolen city of Vilna. The French toyed for forty-eight hours with the idea of saving the Spanish Republic and France's vital military communications with North Africa by force and then, lacking British encouragement, relapsed into internal strife. And Germany, swollen with an arrogance that it had not dared indulge since 1918, laid plans for conquering by arms, commercial pressure, encirclement or internal intrigues the Czechoslovak Republic.

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CHAPTER XXV

DEMOCRACIES SURRENDER . . .

"I feel certain that you can get all the essential without war and without delay."

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN to Adolf Hitler.

BY THE beginning of 1939 the situation had begun to be clear. The ideas for which decent Englishmen, Frenchmen and Americans fought the Great War had been sacrificed to the impossible hope of co-operation between Fascism and democracy, if not to the aim of "money in our time." Hatred of the Soviets paralyzed French initiative, warped British vision. Reading the German newspapers after Munich, listening to the innumerable crowings of Hitler and Goebbels, studying the carefully planned spontaneity of the Italian newspapers as they shrieked for Nice and Savoy and Corsica and Tunisia, one could not avoid the conclusion that whatever Chamberlain and Daladier thought of Munich, the Fascist leaders considered it the definite act of abdication on the part of France and Britain, become too cowardly, cynical, corrupt and exhausted to defend themselves, still less protect any world order. After Munich nothing but a real stand under conditions far more adverse than when Czechoslovakia was still intact and friendly could have convinced aggressive Japs, Germans and Italians that

the world was not theirs for the taking. Taking? They need not even fight for it; that is, not against anything but weak States like Spain and China.

Of Chamberlain one might, charitably speaking, say that he was a dupe, the dupe of his ignorance of international affairs, of his Cliveden friends, of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini; of Daladier that he was too weak to withstand the terrific pressure brought upon him by the English, by the Germans and by all the various sorts of Frenchmen, weak or calculating, who chose shame to war; of Bonnet that he mobilized the forces that betrayed the Czechs almost as if he were moved by motives all his own. Yet this does not change the fact that had the British fleet been mobilized, say in the middle of August, in answer to German provocation, it is extremely unlikely that Hitler, regardless of any encouragement received from Georges Bonnet and the French defeatists, would have done anything but continue howling.

For Germany, even with Italian assistance and the Japanese at Soviet Russia's back door, had almost no chance of winning a war against Britain, France and Czechoslovakia, to say nothing of Soviet Russia. Granted an immense superiority in the air force of the Axis, no war had ever yet been won in the air, nor did the experience of either Spain or China point to such a victory in the near future. On the sea, the Axis Powers were hopelessly inferior, for the Japanese fleet, however supreme in Asiatic waters, simply could not operate west of Singapore. The blockade of Germany and Italy would have been virtually absolute. Neither Power could long survive without vast im-

ports, nor were the available stocks sufficient for a long war.

French and Czech artillery was superior in quantity and at least equal in quality to that of Italy and Germany. After the occupation of the Sudeten area, the Germans took twelve hundred long-range guns from the abandoned Czech "Maginot Line" and moved them to the West to use later against France. In number of available soldiers, strange as it may seem, Italy and Germany would have had at best only a tiny superiority over France and Czechoslovakia alone. For in all Germany there were, in September, 1938, not over three million trained reserves, as against at least five million for France, with its colonies. The forty beautifully equipped Czechoslovak divisions would have compensated for more than the same number of Italian troops. General Franco would have been subdued in a few weeks, and from liberated Spain, restored to the legitimate Republic, it is likely that a considerable contingent of veterans would have been collected to aid France against Italy, should such help have proved necessary. Some military experts consider it doubtful whether the Germans could have reduced the Czech "Maginot Line" at all, or have held their own incomplete Siegfried Line in the West against French attacks.

So much for calculations made without any reliance upon the Soviets. How substantial this aid would have been is a matter of controversy. Who can say whether within three months it would not have meant several hundred airplanes and a substantial expeditionary force?

Roumania had signified its intention of not oppos-

ing the passage of Russian aircraft, and could have been induced to permit that of Russian infantry. And, most important, a firm attitude by Great Britain would conceivably have brought Poland into the war against Germany within a short time from the outbreak of the conflict.

Germany in the autumn of 1938 was simply honey-combed with subversion and defeatism. In all walks of life, on all social levels, within the Nazi Party, the State apparatus and the German army itself were groups which had coldly resolved upon Germany's defeat (or lack of success) as the quickest means of getting rid of Hitler and a régime they had come to loathe, a régime incompatible with everything finest in the German tradition and with Germany's immense contribution to world civilization. Highly placed individuals within these groups had already sought contact with the American Administration in the hope of securing a speedy mediation of the conflict once they had eliminated every trace of Nazi practice and theory. Members of the British and French Cabinets had been told of this situation. But though Chamberlain and Bonnet chose to overlook the intimation as "vague rumor," there is reason for believing that shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, disaffection, awakened in Berlin by the mere appearance of a motorized division on its way to the Czech border, would have become open rebellion.

A democratic victory, Sir John Simon notwithstanding, would have saved Czechoslovakia even within its old frontiers. The conduct of a serious war, let us remember, is never long entrusted to men with an almost physical craving for peace at any price. Even

had Bohemia been run over (as Belgium was, and Serbia), any conceivable peace conference would doubtless have restored the Czechs to the possession of the fortifications along the Sudeten rim. In the process of losing these fortifications most of the Sudeten towns and farmhouses would have disappeared. It is inconceivable that future peacemakers would have shown excessive sympathy for a group like the Sudetens which had wantonly invoked a general conflict in order to leave a liberal democracy and join a racial tyranny: far better arrange for removing the surviving population to districts outside the Czech defensive line which could then be ceded to a repentant Germany without weakening the Czechoslovak State economically or strategically.

The writer knows of German officers who, believing Germany's defeat inevitable, reckoned with the loss of the left bank of the Rhine, East Prussia and the rest of Upper Silesia. No, the excuse that in any case Czechoslovakia was doomed simply will not wash.

In short, of the claims made by the Munich "appeasers," little or nothing stands save that eleventh-hour resistance to blackmail might have provoked war (Hitler personally wanted the fun of a "little war" won against the Czechs and his incalculable mental apparatus might at any moment have plumped for slaughter and a *Heldentod*), and that war would have meant horrible suffering to British and French civilians.

Still, it may be urged, Chamberlain and Halifax, Daladier and Bonnet, had complete access to the facts of the situation. If, being in possession of these facts, they chose not to fight, must it not be that they had

good though unpublished reason for preferring submission?

Unfortunately, not. Pacifism and property are insidious drugs. A belief that in any great war civilization, at least as represented by great property owners, is bound to suffer eclipse, may suggest reasons for national surrender that do not seem treason to the rich. False but audacious slogans such as "war never settles anything anyway" or "the last war was a complete failure for the victors" can easily mislead narrow, conceited minds. Moreover, there are natures that take pleasure in self-abasement. In explaining to a crowd of terror-stricken Germans that in seizing the Sudetens Adolf Hitler had not really risked war, Paul Joseph Goebbels showed a fine understanding of this fact. "I am asked," he said, "what would have happened if Chamberlain had not come to Berchtesgaden. I answer, this particular Chamberlain was bound to come!" Even a desire "to be fair particularly towards one's enemies" can become transformed from a virtue into a fatal weakness when directed to gangsters still at large.

For what did Chamberlain and Daladier really understand of Fascism? To them it bulked largely as a form of nationalism, almost legitimate in essence, the result of a fine resentment to humiliation and defeat. The Nazi Movement started from these, but its deeper essence was destructively revolutionary: a revolt against Christian, Occidental civilization and civilized values in the name of savage greed for power. Its origins went back before the Treaty of Versailles and indeed before the Great War. But, so long as millions in Great Britain and France considered it

as middle-class reaction to Communism, so long as groups of privileged persons, to quote Thomas Mann, looked upon its disappearance as "unbearable," new surrenders to evil, despite their awful consequences, remained always possible.

Cowardly "appeasement" was still the order of the day. The only thing that could prove that the democracies were not moribund was a manifestation of power. Were the great European democracies still capable of such a manifestation?

CHAPTER XXVI

HITLER CHOOSES CATASTROPHE

"Outside, the storms of war may blow . . . but in our hearts this Sunday morning there is peace. . . . This is no question of fighting for Danzig or fighting for Poland. We are fighting to save the world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defence of all that is most sacred to man."

WINSTON CHURCHILL to the House of Commons
in London, Sept. 3, 1939.

"The responsibility for bloodshed falls entirely upon Hitler. The choice of peace was in his hands. He wished for war. . . . We are making war because it was forced upon us."

Premier EDOUARD DALADIER to the French nation,
Sept. 3, 1939.

THE evening of March fifteenth, 1939: three snow-bound skiers, each a stranger to the others, had to spend the night in a small Swiss roadside *Gasthaus*. One of them, a woman, went to the telephone to reassure her husband in Zurich, for the blizzard raged over the country. She returned to the dinner table, shaking with emotion.

"Just imagine, German troops have occupied Czechoslovakia."

"Terrible!" cried her compatriot. "It may be Switzerland's turn next." He stopped, shocked by the

obvious elation of the third skier. Their faces hardened. "Excuse me," the Swiss male queried; "is the gentleman perhaps a Nazi? If so, we can take another table."

"Sit still," replied the American newspaperman. "Dear friends, there is a God! No, you don't understand: Czechoslovakia lost its real independence in September. But now Hitler has broken all his pledges and destroyed the last illusion concerning his aims. Last year he said that the Sudetens were his 'last territorial claim.' He cannot claim that the Czechs and Slovaks are Germans. Henceforth none can believe him, no matter how hard they try. Come and drink with me, for thanks to Hitler's blunder Europe and Switzerland may remain free. Waiter, a bottle of champagne!"

Solemnly they drank, the two Swiss only half convinced. Finally the woman began to smile. "It's true. The Germans are awful. But one can always count on their stupidity."

To all but the blind, Germany's fundamental intentions had been foreshadowed before Hitler came to power; had been visible since he left the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations; became shriekingly conspicuous when he attacked the Spanish Republic, seized Austria and, with British and French complicity, tore the rim from the Czechoslovak Republic. But there were still plenty of blind, wilful or otherwise, in the early Spring of 1939. Neville Chamberlain, Georges Bonnet, American Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy, even Premier Edouard Daladier. In the beginning of March Sir Horace Wilson, Britain's prize amateur diplomat, was warned of the

impending attack on the Czechs. His supercilious answer was, that his monitor had lived too long in America and learned to "dramatize everything." Only a few days before the rape of Prague, Neville Chamberlain was exuding optimism and a group of Anglo-American bankers in London had been informed that the moment was not distant when a fat international loan could be made to Germany since "Hitler had chosen the way of peace." The London *Sunday Dispatch* even launched (March 12) the idea of a great "peace conference," presumably to do away with some imaginary injustices still left over from the Treaty of Versailles. Yet in the middle of February, several newspaper correspondents in Paris had noted French nervousness over the partial German mobilization that was even then proceeding.

If in defending the Munich capitulation as the "dawn of European pacification" Chamberlain and Bonnet were not dupes, they were worse: modern Machiavellis gambling with their respective countries' future on the single chance that Hitler would direct his ambition toward the East and come into a refreshing conflict with the Bolsheviks. There is evidence for the latter hypothesis. Chamberlain's speech immediately after the March fifteenth outrage was not that of an indignant man. The Paris weekly *L'Europe Nouvelle* (June 24, 1939) declared that Georges Bonnet actually returned to the French Ambassador Coulondre in Berlin a dispatch wherein the ambassador related how, in reply to his protest to Germany's Foreign Minister over the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Ribbentrop had become indignant since Bonnet at Paris in December had indicated France intended

giving Germany "a free hand in the East." Bonnet preferred to eliminate a document recording this charge from the French official archives.

If this was the case, Chamberlain and Bonnet figured without their peoples. The mass of the French and British had striven hard the previous September to believe Hitler's statement that he did not want the Czechs and had no claim to make on the Poles; they hoped this meant he really desired to reach a lasting and permanent peace on the basis of a negotiated compromise. The fourteen German divisions that marched into Czechoslovakia, after the weak Czech Premier Hacha had been bullied into signing his country's death sentence at Berchtesgaden the previous day, dispelled any such pipe dreams. In his next speech, at Birmingham, Chamberlain fairly oozed indignation. And at that moment a new coalition against aggression was ideally born. The French case was a little different. It was not so much the German threat as the Italian claims to French territory, launched the previous November, that startled the property-obsessed bourgeoisie of France into alertness. To be bullied by powerful Germany was one thing—and incidentally Germany was making no claims as yet to French territory—but Italy, in French eyes, was upstart and insolent. By the end of January, it was obvious that the too comfortable French were pulling themselves together; both Daladier and Bonnet were pledged publicly not to yield an inch of (French) territory.

In view of subsequent developments it is clear that both France and Britain had, since their Munich humiliation, followed a double policy. On the one side

they advocated allowing Germany to be top-dog in Eastern Europe, and tried to believe in its peaceful intentions. But on the other they set about correcting the slight but real military inferiority to the German-Italian Axis Powers that had made many sincere anti-Nazis partisans of the surrender at Munich. Airplane factories came into being overnight. An immense section of Britain's large and efficient industry went over to war preparation. France, less industrialized and more hidebound, followed Britain in placing large orders for more military planes in the United States. The French military equipment was thoroughly overhauled. And the abrupt manner in which the French rejected any incipient British desire to "mediate" between France and Italy testified that something of the old unconquerable French spirit was reviving in a people that had seemed on the edge of collapse. Moreover, wherever he could, Franklin D. Roosevelt did his utmost to encourage a will to resistance in the larger European democracies that were all that stood between the United States and future ideological, commercial and even military attack by Germany. From the fifteenth of March good observers predicted that the majority of French and British would, if their rulers permitted, oppose further German expansion, if necessary by force. Deceived by his politicians, doped by his newspaper, lulled to sleep by twenty-five years of slow decline that at some point would have meant sheer rot, the common citizen of the two big democracies realized that not only had he supinely yielded everything for which he and his dead brothers and fathers had fought the Great War, but that his present existence as a free, not to say domi-

nant, nation was threatened by the loud-mouthed German with the comical moustaches and his pop-eyed Italian confederate. Frenchmen and Englishmen who had approved the Munich betrayal from ignorance or had conscience over the war settlement decided they had had enough. Left on the side of the "Axis" were only those friendly to Fascism for its own sake or as the needed buckler against Bolshevism, or for money; those who preferred their own life and comfort to sacrifice; those who feared Fascism so much that they were mortally afraid of the concentration of power any participation in war was bound to bring, even in a democracy. Taken together, these groups were powerful; they had friends in high places; but they were a distinct minority.

On March nineteenth the French Parliament voted Daladier "full powers to rule by decree until the following November."

This change seems to have been largely lost on the dictators. While Chamberlain and Daladier went ahead forming the "third anti-Hitler coalition" (Barthou tried to organize one in 1934 and was checkmated by the British; Baldwin and Eden feebly tried to muster another under League auspices against Italy in 1935 and were thwarted by the French under Pierre Laval) Germany and Italy blithely set about cashing in on the supposed capitulation of the democracies. To them it was enough that London and Paris had restricted their displeasure with the Czech affair to words; they had not gone to war to save the Czechs whose continued existence after Munich they had guaranteed, any more than they had over the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the rape of Austria, Italo-

German intervention against the Spanish Republic, the Japanese attack on China or the seizing of the Sudetens.

Just one week after Hitler compelled the Czech Premier Hacha to capitulate at Berchtesgaden, Ribbentrop served notice on the Poles to stand and deliver Danzig and a strip of territory with a motor highway through Polish Pomerania to East Prussia. Two days later German troops frightened Lithuania into returning Memel to the Reich without resistance. The town itself was German enough but, like Danzig, its entire hinterland was un-Teutonic. What difference did that make to Hitler? The Nazis explained that Germany was seizing one unhappy country after another only in order to spread the "benefits of its dominion." Germany needed more "vital space." For, as Hitler put it, there is an essential difference between the subjection of inferiors, as for instance the late President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, to Hermann Goering, and the reverse. In point of fact, the ethics of the Third Reich would have shamed self-respecting savages.

Noticing that the German rape of Memel still failed to move the sleepy democracies to action, Hitler's "brilliant second," Mussolini, decided on getting a little more "vital space" of his own, and after a little bluster about Italy's claim on Tunisia and Jibuti, finally took courage on Good Friday to seize Albania, a country which had been more or less sold to Italy by its king, Zog I, a few years before. But although Achmet Zogu Bey Mati reaped only what he deserved, it was hard on the backward but essentially decent Albanians. Unfortunately their courage availed abso-

lutely nothing against the new tactic of lightning attack by mechanized divisions which the Italians and Germans had perfected against the Spanish Republicans. The British and French quickly warned the Italians out of Corfu, but otherwise took no action.

Nonetheless, something extremely important was happening. On March twenty-fifth Poland's Foreign Minister, Colonel Joseph Beck, flatly refused Hitler's demands. Here was no Schuschnigg or Hacha. Daladier had already announced he would never yield "a rod of French ground or one of France's rights." Chamberlain himself increased the size of the British standing army, and announced an intention of opposing any German plan to "dominate Europe by force." The British Foreign Office communicated with Roumania and Greece; and finally (March 31) Britain offered Poland a military guarantee on Poland's terms, namely, that Poland alone was to be the judge of Poland's interests. This was revolutionary. Only six months previously, Chamberlain had aided Hitler to despoil the Czechs. Now he was unquestionably helping the Poles to resist. But just as Hitler had done after his rebuff by the Czechs in May 1938, so now, as the German General Staff confessed six months later, he started making military plans for crushing the stiff-necked Poles. Meanwhile he had good reason to believe he might wring what he wanted from Poland, or at least isolate that country, by a well-prepared and conducted "war of nerves." For this sort of thing the "Axis" possessed inherent advantages. For instance, whereas at home the totalitarian governments monopolized the stage, in the democracies a noisy opposition still more or less openly took sides

with Fascism, rejoiced at the final downfall of the Spanish Republic, and urged a second Munich. Moreover, Hitler and Mussolini were working for precise aims while Chamberlain and Daladier still hoped that some basis could be found for doing nothing at all.

The "war of nerves" began around April first and lasted five months. The tempo of competitive armament rose to *presto*. April thirteenth, Britain gave a guarantee of independence to Roumania. On April fifteenth President Roosevelt suddenly asked Hitler and Mussolini to guarantee not to attack any of some thirty countries . . . and two days later was snubbed by the official German news agency. April fourteenth, British statesmen, for the first time, despite reassuring statements to the British Parliament, invited Soviet Russia to enter what was called the "peace front against aggression." On April twelfth Britain and France "promised each other to defend Belgium and Holland in case of attack by a third country." In the second half of April French economy was finally put on a war basis, something which had been done in Germany several years previously. Finally, a proof of gradual awakening to reality, Chamberlain (April 27) put through the Parliament a bill introducing military conscription. Practically this made little difference, as the British were already training soldiers as rapidly as their equipment permitted. Morally it had the immense effect of convincing the French that Britain did not intend to "fight to the last drop of French blood," while itself supplying only warships and a few thousand aviators.

Germany's prompt answer to British conscription was to hand Britain a note denouncing the Naval

Limitation agreement between the two countries; and the following day (April 28) Hitler defended Germany's action in a long speech, declaring that Germany wanted only a "just peace." For the first time, this speech failed to make any notable impression in Britain or in France, two countries in which the politicians had hitherto hung on Hitler's words as on those of the Angel Gabriel, announcing eternal weal or woe. Continuing their psychological bombardment, Germany and Italy announced (May 7) the conclusion of a real military alliance, the so-called "Steel Pact" (actually signed May 22), the purpose of which was to assure to both countries the necessary "vital space" and, naturally, to "maintain peace." Daladier countered by telling the French Chamber of Deputies that France had given guarantees to Greece and Roumania (it had long had a mutual assistance pact with Poland). At the same moment Chamberlain repeated that Britain was no longer willing to stand aside and see one country after another enslaved by Germany. A German attempt to change the *status quo* in Danzig by force would, he said, result in a war with Great Britain. And the following day Britain announced a mutual assistance pact with Turkey.

In answer the Nazis began at Danzig the same sort of noisy provocation they had carried to such notable success in Austria and Czechoslovakia: complaints intended to hide their own breaches of the Danzig Statute and shrieks for help covering their own attacks on Poles and the few dissenting non-Nazi Germans. Toward the end of the month Germany offered non-aggression pacts to the Scandinavian States. Most of them refused, but little Denmark, cursed by geogra-

phy with a common front on the Reich, accepted through fear. What wonder! It had become Hitler's habit to offer such a pact and his "friendship" to each next intended victim. On May twenty-ninth the population of the diminutive principality of Liechtenstein, wedged in between Greater Germany and Switzerland, vividly peeped their desire to remain independent! Nor was the "brilliant second" inactive. At a speech in Turin, May fifteenth, he was received by carefully rehearsed shouts, "Nice and Savoy," doubtless expressing an Italian desire for these French territories. June third, Mussolini annexed Albania to the Italian Crown.

In such an atmosphere the 105th meeting of the League of Nations Council at Geneva (May 22) could at best provoke sad hilarity. The stark League building seemed a vast and tragic mausoleum holding the dead dream of better and more resolute men.

Germany turned Bohemia and Moravia into a German protectorate (a status commonly reserved for barbarous lands) while proclaiming little Slovakia, with two or three million people, "independent." The Slovaks, perhaps the most backward of the Slavic peoples, had been for centuries squashed by Hungary. Yet once attached to the Czechs at the end of the World War, and by these educated against their will, they had developed that unintelligent resentment which is the open door to Nazi propaganda. Instead of realizing that Germany's primary interest was in using their territory as starting point for a flanking movement when the moment came to attack Poland, the Slovak leaders bleated with satisfaction at the thought of being the "ally" of mighty Germany and

proceeded to institute a dwarf totalitarian régime of their own!

May gave way to June with the "war of nerves" still proceeding. Germany began moving troops into Slovakia. Reports were current (and untrue) that the Germans were preparing the open annexation of the Bohemian-Moravian Protectorate. On the twenty-third France and Turkey signed a pact of mutual assistance, France paying for the honor by allowing the Turks to take possession of the entire Sandjak of Alexandretta, a district in which the Turks formed a minority. At approximately the same time the Germans, at a conference over Rhine River navigation at Konstanz, startled the Swiss by suddenly declaring they wished to make the river navigable as far up as the Lake of Constance itself, which might thus be transformed into a German internal naval base! The Germans began another of their quiet mobilizations. On June twenty-seventh the author was told by a member of the French General Staff, "If the Germans were intending to attack Poland three weeks from now, they would not be behaving any differently." The following day sixteen big German naval guns were installed at Bischoffsberg on Danzig territory.

In the field of vituperation, German accents rose higher and higher, German voices became more and more shrill. At Berlin on June twenty-third, Dr. Joseph Goebbels announced: "We Germans consider that our present position in the world does not correspond to our proper rank and that in consequence this position must be changed." Which was clear enough, seeing that in six years Germany had already broken half a dozen treaties, built up the most power-

ful army in Europe, attacked Spain, and seized Austria, Czechoslovakia and Memel. But better was to come. Two days later the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, acknowledged organ of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published a long article intended to demonstrate the military helplessness of Britain and France. Another two days and Goering's organ, the *Nationalzeitung* of Essen, under the bold heading, "Victor after Twenty-Five Years," gloated over Germany's success in turning the tables on the democracies—thus incidentally admitting the link between Hitlerism and the pan-Germanist philosophy which bore the chief responsibility for the World War.

The situation was now patently so serious that when (June 27) Daladier closed the session of the French Chamber of Deputies, he warned them that he might have to recall them at any moment to deal with an international crisis, declaring that "France is resolved to stand up with all its strength against any attempts at domination which may be attempted."

Daladier meant business. Over the week end of July first and second the French Government remained at its post in the belief that Germany might start trouble and France be compelled to fight. Hitler and the Germans did not believe him. Why should they? During the previous six years they had found the democracies self-indulgent, torn by party and class strifes, dominated by a well-to-do class that feared loss of property more than anything. They overlooked, in the British, a hidden fund of the character that had made them masters of a quarter of the earth; in the French, a passionate attachment to their homes and country and the finest military tradition

in Europe; in both a profound preference for liberty against constraint, for tolerance against persecution, for individual dignity against deification of the State.

On the surface, however, it still seemed that the men of Munich, notably Chamberlain and Georges Bonnet, might not have the courage to stand their ground and face the consequences. In neither country had the voices of "appeasement" (a decent word that through its association with the betrayal of the Czechs had come to stink) entirely ceased. Early in May, Marcel Déat, French Deputy and former Minister, announced in the Paris *Oeuvre* his dislike of "dying for Danzig." But Déat had been a confederate of Bonnet in preparing the Munich surrender. What music for Nazi ears! By the middle of May, the writer was aware that individuals close to the French Foreign Minister, if not the Minister himself, were all for "compromise" of the Danzig Question. The well-known jurist, Professor Joseph Barthélemy, the same who had been the first to urge the betrayal of the Czechs a year before, wrote (*Le Temps*, June 12) that agreement with Germany would be advisable before rather than after a war. The *Temps* belonged to the French steel makers and the *Temps* crowd had been rabid "appeasers." International business circles were still in favor of "compromise"; they feared lest war destroy their position as a dominant class. In no case would it mean the big profits of 1914. (Never was a better refutation, incidentally, of the Marxian claim that war, in the modern world, was the outcome of "capitalist imperialism.")

Yet the chief cause of the unshaken German conviction that they would get what they wanted without

a general war was doubtless Chamberlain himself. This aging merchant simply could not get it into his head that certain issues could not be compromised or that a concession that might reasonably be made to a friendly associate ought not to be made to a man with Hitler's past. Chamberlain had given Poland his promise of support and he intended to keep his promise. But he was still far from understanding the Nazis. As Pertinax wrote (*L'Europe Nouvelle*, April 8), the English, with their insistence on balance of power, had not yet "understood the organic peril [as distinguished from the transitory peril of Napoleon] that pan-Germanism constituted for the Continent." Since Chamberlain could not really believe that each German success, however insignificant, inevitably prepared the way for a new aggression, he continued to talk, not of resisting any further German expansion, but merely of resisting German expansion by violence. Instead of telling Hitler: "You will never obtain Danzig and the Corridor except over the dead body of Great Britain!" he and his Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, continued as late as August twenty-ninth to insist that the German-Polish differences could "be solved by way of direct negotiations" (British White Paper, Miscellaneous No. 8, 1939). Danzig city was unquestionably German. But to yield it to Germany would have invited a demand for the whole Corridor a week later. The Corridor had been for centuries Polish in population; and even had it not been, its transfer to Germany, in the light of what happened to Czechoslovakia, would have meant the enslavement of Poland. Yet no negotiation could have got anywhere that did not give Germany at least

Danzig. Therefore any negotiation meant the ultimate surrender of Polish independence. The Germans knew this; Chamberlain apparently did not. Therefore the Germans' stubborn belief that the British, and with them the French, would weaken at the last moment. For they understood the democracies only a little better than the democracies understood them. As Hermann Goering was reported to have commented on one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's peace appeals: "This is a voice I no more understand than if it came from another planet."

And not only did the British take the wrong tone: they admittedly refrained from adequate self-defence measures lest they "provoke" Hitler. In their diplomatic notes they never insisted that the Germans must clear out of Czechoslovakia before anyone would negotiate anything with them. They appointed a Consul-General to Prague in place of the former Minister, thereby giving the Germans the impression that Britain recognized the German Protectorate (whereas in reality, the United States, Britain, France and Poland refused to admit that Czech independence had ceased). Obviously they would have been happy to reach an understanding with Germany over the body of Czechoslovakia. But there was worse. At the end of March Poland became Britain's ally. The Polish army was overstrong in cavalry, notably weak in anti-aircraft guns, heavy artillery, tanks, airplanes and motor transport. The British and French ought normally to have begun rushing these things to Poland, regardless of expense. Instead of which, the British haggled with the Poles over a few extra million pounds of war loan, finally demanding the right of

supervision of the manner of spending. This proposition the Poles refused, contenting themselves with the trifle the British Treasury offered.

It was true that the British and French General Staffs distrusted Polish military optimism and were alarmed at the large depots of war material close to the German border. Nor did the Poles welcome advice. From the day of its restoration in 1918, new Poland had suffered from an inferiority feeling that took the form of dangerous conceit. Poland had once been a great country. It might again become a great country. But it was not a great country, still less a "Great Power," in 1919. It was an abandoned battlefield over which Russian, German and Austrian armies had spread destruction for four years. It was inhabited by a people divided for over a century, united only by a common language and a patriotism. Obviously it would take fifty years of peace and prosperity to heal such scars, and during this time the less heard from Poland, politically (or so one might have thought), the better. And instead? Instead, the national hero, Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, deliberately twice attacked the potentially far more powerful Bolsheviks in an effort to annex the Russian Ukraine . . . and was only saved by a military miracle. Instead, General Zeligowski seized the town of Vilna from the Lithuanians against the desire of victorious France and Britain and contrary to the Covenant of the League of Nations Poland had promised to respect. After 1926, when Pilsudski overthrew an admittedly badly functioning democracy and set up his personal rule, the Poles consistently sabotaged any attempt at collective security under the League, refused one re-

quest to join the Little Entente (which with Poland's help might have been a very strong force), played, from 1934 on, a consistently German game, took part in the plunder of helpless Czechoslovakia in 1938, treated the national minorities and Jews (variously calculated at from twenty to thirty per cent of the population) with a harshness rendered necessary by a policy of extreme centralization . . . all on the ground that Poland as a "Great Power" needed no aid or advice from anyone. It is true that the Poles had an explanation for this policy, but it was never very plausible to the writer, nor did it jibe with the shadow of coming events.

Britain and France had any number of reasons for disassociating themselves from the Poland of the Pilsudski Colonels, had they wished to. But Poland, wedged between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, occupied a key position in Europe; and a new partition of the country by Communist Russia and Nazi Germany might be disastrous for the Western democracies. Moreover, the Poles redeemed their political blunders by boundless patriotism and courage. They were willing to defend themselves, with or without assistance, against any and all aggressors. Future historians may find it difficult to explain why any fear of "provoking Germany" prevented their industrially developed allies from supplying them immediately after April first, 1939, with at least some of the war material they so badly needed.

Adolf Hitler had an explanation for it. The British and French, he had good reason to believe, wished to constitute a "Peace Front" strong enough to enable them to negotiate a "new settlement" with Germany

on equal terms, but not strong enough to prevent certain members of it from refusing to negotiate any further concessions with the Germans and the Italians. Why else did Britain approve attempts at "mediation" by the Vatican and later by the pro-Nazi League of Nations Commissioner at Danzig, the Swiss, Burckhardt? Why else should Chamberlain so stubbornly oppose the entrance into the British Cabinet of Winston Churchill, the man Hitler most feared, whose presence would have convinced the world that Britain meant business? Why else was a minor Cabinet Member, Hudson, permitted, during the height of the "war of nerves," to discuss with the German economic specialist, Wohltat, a plan whereby Germany, if it refrained from war, would be "refloated" by a loan of incredible size?

By the beginning of July the European political waters were running fast and smooth towards some tremendous Niagara. Only one or both of two eventualities could have held Hitler back from pressing his demands on Poland even to war: the immediate revocation of the American neutrality legislation; the entrance of the Soviets into the "Peace Front." For the Nazi military machine could not stand a long war on two fronts.

Despite President Roosevelt, the American Senate either did not see the gravity of the hour or did not care. Senator Borah's remark to the President that he, Borah, "had his own information" and that Roosevelt was "greatly exaggerating" the war danger, will remain a classic of Congressional *dunciana*. By August first, any hope that the United States would, by showing their colors, save the world from catastrophe, had

vanished amid American party strife. And Americans, most of whom had blamed Britain and France (perhaps a little contemptuously) for permitting Nazi Germany to attack and seize so many little countries one after another and generally nullify the results of the Great War, adopted the identical attitude when it was their turn. Another Hitler triumph, a completely nazified Europe from which every breath of freedom and democracy had disappeared, the conceivable defeat of France and Great Britain, were, it appeared, no concern of hard-headed Americans. The full shock of this attitude, as reflected in the Congress, was terrific. The Germans exulted.

There still remained hope of a speedy understanding between the democracies and the Soviets. The course of the negotiations was strictly hidden. But certain facts were clear. France possessed a pact of mutual assistance with the Russians. It depended, to be sure, on France's lending assistance to the Czechoslovaks; assistance which France had refused. Did the pact still exist? The Russians in September 1938 had continually assured the Czechs of their "support," even if France defaulted; but none had seen any written confirmation of this. Immediately after March fifteenth, the Soviet Government publicly suggested a conference of States prepared to band themselves against further aggression. Great Britain and France rejected the suggestion. Instead they turned to Poland and Roumania, and only when the arrangements with these countries were complete (April 14) did they open real negotiations with the Soviets. By May second their original proposals were turned down and they in turn had repulsed the counter offer of the So-

viets. Three days later Maxim Litvinov, the unprepossessing but sly Bolshevik who had been Russia's Foreign Minister for many years and had become the symbol of proffered Russian co-operation with democracy against Fascism, was abruptly relieved of his post. No explanation was given. The Moscow *Isvestia* (May 11) complained that without full reciprocity there was no hope of Anglo-Russian negotiations coming to anything. It was reported (May 18) that Britain was "still refusing" to give Russia a full-fledged pact of mutual assistance, and the following day Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons of "a veil, a wall separating the two governments." Conservative Britain's dislike of the Bolsheviks had never been hidden; Stalin's contempt of Chamberlain, the "friend of Fascism," the "man of Munich" who had tried to direct German aggressiveness against Russia, was equally well known. But the two enemies proclaimed the intention of resisting further aggression in Europe. Why could they not get together?

On May thirty-first Litvinov's successor, Molotov, in a public speech reproached the democracies with "marking time." Outsiders tended to agree with Molotov that Chamberlain and* Halifax were certainly not showing any of that energy of procedure they had manifested when Chamberlain flew to Munich to betray the Czechs or when they offered an alliance to Poland on the latter's terms. By the end of July, the deadlock was public property. So far as was ever known, it was owing to two Russian demands: first, Stalin should be judge of any German danger to the little Baltic states, Latvia and Esthonia, and occupy these countries with the consent of the Western Pow-

ers, in case they found it necessary to resist or forestall the Germans; second, the Soviets should, in case of war, send infantry and airplanes to Poland under an organization all their own. On these conditions Russia would sign a mutual assistance pact with Great Britain and reevaluate the existing pact with France. The British feared that such a claim covered a Russian intention of seizing the little states in cold blood. How could a "Peace Front" countenance such aggression? Poland absolutely refused to consent to the presence of Russian troops; and how compel Poland? It was a fix. The Russians suddenly suggested a way out: let the democracies send military missions to discuss common plans with the Russians. Early in August, French and British military missions left for Moscow. And military talks began on the twelfth. Chamberlain had finally consented to pay some tribute to Bolshevik vanity.

Meanwhile, as the diplomats put it, "the situation had steadily deteriorated." A British bombing squadron had maneuvered over France one night and a French one over Great Britain a few nights later, just to show the Germans it could be done. Daladier had violently broken the financial and other fetters in which Germany had too long, by propaganda and worse, enveloped a certain number of French politicians, industrialists, intellectuals and social lights. A British military mission to Warsaw had returned with the certainty the Poles intended to fight, "with or without assistance." France and Britain sturdily insisted Poland would receive their help and, to free his hands, Chamberlain had capitulated to Japan in a matter of four chinamen at Tientsin, although the

Japs had blockaded the British Concession there and subjected Britishers to indescribable humiliations before the eyes of the Chinese population. There began to be talk in Paris and London of what would have to be done with Germany after a successful war in order to prevent a repetition of aggression twenty years thence.

The Poles were standing on three points: Danzig was not to be annexed to Germany; Danzig was to remain within the Polish customs line; all existing Polish rights within the Free City, including that of maintaining a munitions dump and soldiers to guard it, on the island called the Westerplatte, were to be maintained. On this basis Poland was willing to negotiate.

The German answer to this was to fill Danzig with soldiers. Military maneuvers in Thuringia were a pretext for the mobilization of yet more divisions that gradually moved towards the Eastern frontier.

It was an ugly situation. But July was nothing to August. Winston Churchill startled the Commons by the statement (August 2) that Germany already had two million men under arms and would have another half million at the end of the month. To oppose them, France probably had something like a million and the British fleet was set to go. The German newspapers celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the World War by stating coolly that "1914 had been only a beginning." Germany, boasted Goering, would never again allow anyone to challenge its "vital rights." Himmler's weekly, *Das Schwarze Korps*, called the Poles bastards and idiots, comparable only to Negro tribes. The German Government

sent a threatening message to Poland. The entire German press abused the British, but for whose support, they said, Poland would long ago have capitulated in the matter of Danzig. This was probably an error; Polish Marshal Smigly-Ridz replied (August 6), "there is only one answer to violence: force and violence." Early in August, probably the second, began the German "little mobilization," to be followed in two weeks by the "*grosse Mobilmachung*." Hitler clearly intended to force the issue before the snow fell. On August twelfth and thirteenth the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, saw Ribbentrop and Hitler, respectively at Salzburg and Berchtesgaden. Little of what occurred leaked out but there was an impression in Paris that Ciano for the first time "had been frightened at Hitler's hysterical determination to dominate Europe." Italy at least gave small signs of any immediate readiness to fight. But there might be a secret agreement for later on.

Early in August appeared two interesting publications by Germans. A book by Hadamowski, radio director of the German Propaganda Ministry, called *World History at a Dog Trot*, explained how cleverly Hitler had duped the world in 1938 by his clever preparations to seize Czechoslovakia, by violence if necessary. The other was *The Line of Hitler's Destiny*, by the ex-Nazi, Otto Strasser, whose brother was murdered at the Fuehrer's orders. If the Poles refused to yield to Hitler's demands, Strasser wrote, four German armies would annihilate Poland in three weeks while the barely prepared French and British would hardly have time to man the Maginot Line. Then, with his armies occupying Poland as far

as the Narew-Vistula-San Line, Hitler would offer fifty years of peace, relying on the difference that would appear in British and French minds between fighting to defend a Poland that still existed and trying to reconquer and re-establish one that had ceased to exist. If, then, the democracies preferred to continue the war, Italy, which had so far been neutral, would take Corsica while Italians and Germans together would seize the Suez Canal, fomenting rebellion in India and the Arab world. Spain meanwhile would seize Gibraltar and French Morocco, and Germany would bloodlessly take over Roumania and Denmark. When all this had been accomplished Hitler would, Strasser wrote, mass his forces in the West and, with Italy and Franco Spain holding French troops on the Alps and the Pyrenees, attack and smash France on the Maginot Line, and Britain through Holland. It was a pretty picture, clearly based on some real knowledge. The French, it was learned, were pressing the Poles to accept the Russian offer of assistance with troops and airplanes. . . . But there is no evidence that the Poles ever expressed an unqualified acceptance. Yet so long as there was a chance of agreement between Russia and the democracies, Hitler might weaken at the last moment. There seemed still a chance.

At this juncture Hitler scored what seemed at the time the greatest diplomatic victory of his astonishing career. Shortly after midnight, August twenty-first, the German and Soviet Governments simultaneously released the following declaration:

“After the conclusion of the Soviet German commerce and credit treaty [announced two days previ-

ously] arose the question of improving the political relations between Germany and the U.S.S.R. The exchange of views on this subject which has taken place between the German and the Soviet Governments has shown the existence of a desire on the part of both parties to diminish the tension in their reciprocal political relations, to eliminate the threat of war and to conclude a pact of nonaggression. In consequence, Herr von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of Germany, will arrive at Moscow in a few days to carry on the parleys in view of the conclusion of such a pact."

Stalin had doublecrossed Chamberlain and deliberately opened the floodgates of German aggression! He had always admired Hitler, whose raucous shouting and sudden "panther leaps" upon the weak had impressed him with Germany's vitality. With Hitler he shared the view that the democracies were hopelessly senile. In Russian eyes, Chamberlain and Bonnet had sought to encourage a war between Germany and the Soviets; they had betrayed Austria and China, betrayed democracy in Spain and Czechoslovakia. Their present manner of conducting negotiations had shown they did not really wish for Russian co-operation. They were deferring to the desires of Poles and Roumanians! Now he, Joseph Stalin, whom Britain had not considered important enough to receive a visit from Lord Halifax, had duped them by accepting a treaty of friendship with their enemy, just at the moment when their military men were talking of a common plan of campaign against Germany. Germany would have its war against Poland. The Soviets would take their share of the spoils. Presumably the decadent democracies would not fight. But if they did,

then, at the end of a long and exhausting war between the Fascists and the "demo-capitalists," the Soviets would have the chance they had been waiting for. Remove any danger to Russia by exhausting its possible enemies; at the best, from Stalin's viewpoint, it might spread the revolution throughout Europe.

The wildcat from Georgia licked his lips.

August twenty-third, at Moscow, in the presence of numerous military men of both countries, the Soviet-German pact of friendship was signed. Then began a new period in European history.

Stalin's action had been foreseen by very few. To most political students it had appeared unlikely if not impossible. Why should the country that had had, to date, the most to fear from Nazi Germany suddenly accept what might amount to a common frontier with that country? Hitherto Russia had relished its separation from Germany by a whole curtain of states. Why should Stalin suddenly change his mind? Was there room in Eastern Europe for two such great men as the Fuehrer and the Vozhd?

Just when did he decide to swallow his anti-Fascist spittle and kiss his erstwhile enemy on the lips? Some thought he had never meant to come to terms with the democracies; others that he made up his mind after Munich to square accounts with Chamberlain; still others, that for years he had awaited an invitation from Hitler. In June Americans in Paris knew that contact between Berlin and Moscow had been established. In July some, including the writer, suspected Stalin was playing a double game, for it was known that negotiations with Germany were proceeding simultaneously with negotiations with the de-

mocracies. But suppose he was doing so either in order to remain really neutral or in order to heighten his value and drive a harder bargain with the democracies? Even if his terms had been accepted early enough, had he ever had any intention of coming to an agreement with London and Paris? Infatuated Communists in Paris continued to affirm it, just as they described the pact with Germany as a "peace move." But few believed them. To most people it seemed clear that in coming to terms with the world's chief Fascist, Stalin had—whatever the advantages to the "Great Power" Russia—dealt World Communism what might be a mortal blow.

But if the new friendship was surprising on the part of Stalin, on Adolf Hitler's part it was nothing short of amazing. During nineteen years Hitler had proclaimed Soviet Russia to be the chief enemy of mankind, and particularly to the German portion of it. In the Nazi Bible, *Mein Kampf*, he had pointed to the Communist State as Germany's chief opponent, and likewise as a victim to be overthrown to make room for German colonization. Against the Soviets he had created the anti-Komintern racket, enlisting the aid of Italy, Japan, Franco Spain and Hungary. Stalin he had treated as a blood-stained criminal and Communism as a "world pestilence." One may say that without his trumpeted enmity to Bolshevism, Hitler would never have come to power within Germany; never have secured the subtle assistance of the "Fifth Column" throughout the world that had helped him from victory to victory, from conquest to conquest, in the delusion that it was thereby "saving the world from Communism." Moreover, in his Political Testa-

ment in *Mein Kampf* Hitler had specifically warned the Germans against ever again allowing a second Great Power (France being the first) to be created on Germany's borders. At the Party Meetings in Nuremberg he had, year after year, launched the lightning of his wrath and the shafts of his irony against the Russian Caliban, "rotten to the core and ready for dissection."

Here in one moment, because he had for the first time met a serious obstacle to his expansionist dreams, because instead of winning Great Britain's friendship he had incurred its stern enmity, Hitler sacrificed the philosophy of a lifetime. And with the philosophy went the plan of conquering and colonizing the Greater Germany of two hundred and fifty million people to be carved out of the remnants of Russia. Temporarily sacrificed, of course; *ausgeschoben, nicht aufgehoben*. In bad faith, with the secret aim of later falling upon his new Bolshevik friend. But nonetheless sacrificed. No wonder the entire world marveled, and not least the Germans themselves.

The results were terrific. From the viewpoint of his immediate aim, the conquest and division of Poland, Hitler's path was clear. But at what a price!

The ideological front, "Reds" versus "Fascists," whereby he had always profited, dissolved like soap in water. Germany's near ally, the Japanese, "could not understand." Franco in Spain understood only too well and wondered for just what a million Spaniards had died. The Vatican, always secretly sympathetic to authoritarian government, turned sour like milk in a thunderstorm, and threatened to take Italy away from Germany in its wake. Feudal Hungary

stiffened its back against any "friends of the Reds." Carol of Roumania, Prince Paul of Jugoslavia, suddenly understood that their only safety lay in the hands of the Western democracies. In Germany itself, at Hamburg, and perhaps elsewhere, workmen paraded publicly under intermingled sickle and hammer and swastika. Communists emerged from underground hiding; capitalists shrunk their chests, left their pants unpressed, and sought to attract as little attention as possible. The entire Nazi Party was stricken with an all but incurable ulcer.

Everywhere men sought to make out the riddle.

Like had finally found its way to like, totalitarian Communism to totalitarian anti-Communism, on the basis of a common absence of scruples and a common practice of unrestrained personal tyranny. So much was certain.

While the world wondered whether the Gestapo sadists had really come to love the killers in the Gay-pay-oo, Hitler openly exulted. He had sacrificed a good many friends. But at least he was now sure of a free hand to deal with the insolent Poles. The democracies, in his estimation, would either back down, or at most, after a few perfunctory acts of war to keep the record clean, consent to patch up a peace, leaving the Polish canary inside the two purring pussies. France? An army in the hands of a people gone soft under the rule of decadent politicians. Great Britain? A float at the Cologne Carnival of 1938 portrayed the figure of John Bull, formidable in size and expression, but bearing the inscription, "He does not bite."

Like the Kaiser before him, Hitler misjudged his enemies. With the help of his confederate, Stalin,

Hitler had dealt a right uppercut to the jaw of those two old ring champions France and England and it was intended to be a knockout. Instead, the French and British showed all the old capacity for "taking it" that had made them the cocks of the European walk. They flinched but never even dropped to one knee. Instead they came right back for more. The very day after the diplomatic bombshell exploded, the British, speaking for both the democracies, informed Hitler that regardless of what the Russians did, if he attacked Poland that country would be supported by the two democracies.

Followed ten days of tense diplomatic negotiations, during which the aggressor completed his preparations for the attack. To observers at the time, the talks at this time seemed dangerous, if only because the British negotiators persisted in suggesting that Poland would consent to negotiate some concessions to Germany for the sake of peace. But this very attitude was valuable as yet another proof that to the end the democracies sought to avoid war, while subsequent events proved fairly conclusively that Hitler never had the slightest intention of relinquishing one iota of his demands on Poland. If he could get what he wanted by blackmail, well and good. If not, then he intended to take it. He must have known that the Poles would fight to defend their integrity. So much the better. With the understanding with Stalin over the division of Poland in his pocket, Hitler waxed even more overbearing, continually raising his terms and explaining to a dumbfounded British ambassador that he, Hitler, would rather face a new war at fifty than at fifty-five or sixty years of age! Finally he

declared it was too late for any more talk, since Polish Foreign Minister Beck had failed to come to Berlin within twenty-four hours of being "summoned," in order to receive and accept a sixteen-point ultimatum which the Poles had never been allowed to see. This was what Hitler had done to Austrian Schuschnigg and Czechish Hacha: he called it "negotiating." (Later, to be sure, he sought to hide the truth from future generations by a couple of flat lies; but why should the Poles accept ultimatums from the Austrian house painter?) The Poles, with invasion and ruin before their eyes, stood their ground. They had, as long as they themselves remained firm, the sure backing of Britain and France. Had they weakened, there might have been a new democratic surrender at some new Munich. Instead of surrendering the Poles mobilized fully, thereby insuring their own future restoration and conceivably saving all Europe from ultimate Nazi domination.

At dawn, on Friday, September first, five German armies invaded Poland.

Hitler had accomplished his historic purpose, fulfilled his "manifest destiny." For years the jigsaw puzzle of Nazidom had puzzled the innocent. The torture, the incoherent *Weltanschauung*, the grotesque despotism, the militarization of an entire society, the ninety billion Reichsmarks for the army, confessedly wrung in six years from a people that was already whining over its "misery," all suddenly became apparent as parts of a harsh design, once one slipped into the picture the cold-blooded intention of making war. War to reverse the decisions of Versailles and "revenge" the German army's defeat in 1918, war to

acquire lands and plunder, but primarily "totalitarian" war of the sort advocated by Ludendorff: war for its own sake.

The rest was routine. Mussolini (August 31) offered peace proposals which, accepted by France and Britain until it was apparent the German invasion of Poland was continuing, served the purpose of allowing the mechanized columns of the invaders two more days before the democracies moved. France began full mobilization on September second. The next day, when a Franco-British demand to Germany to halt its attacks had expired, Britain declared war, followed six hours later by France.

At least, there was no doubt about the issues of the new war. They were not economic: here was no pathetic struggle between "Haves" and "Have-nots." Italy, a country that insisted on its "proletarian" penury, quickly decided to "refrain from hostilities," at least until Mussolini could see which side was winning. It was not the capitalists of Britain, France or Germany who plumped for conflict; to the last, they were for peace and at any price save their own pocket-books. No, the issues were best expressed by the regenerate statesmen of Munich, Daladier and Chamberlain, who now saw vividly what had been obscure to them a year before: both leaders said in substance that their countries were fighting "to redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression and enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties." How well this aim was understood was shown by the fact that within a few days citizens of fifty-five foreign countries volunteered for service in the French army.

What about the outcome? If Hitler won, the answer was patent: a new Dark Age, darkened still further by totalitarian control of modern technique, and the organization of society as a militant ant hill. Conditions in the democracies were far from perfect, but their victory meant at least a new chance deliberately to shape a more co-operative and conceivably even a more fraternal world. Free men must inevitably prefer the brutal give and take of warfare to the acceptance of the cold brutality, the slimy terror and systematic persecution prevailing in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. It was a gamble but it was worth taking.

Nor could it properly be said that "war would mean the end of civilization." A world that for years had tolerated the slow martyrdom of millions by despots devoid of Christian or human feelings was already on the road to destruction. But for this moral slump the new, quite unnecessary war would not have occurred. Few conditions could be worse than the "Hitler Peace" that lasted from 1933 to the autumn of 1939.

Yet however simple the setup at the start, none could say in what strange cotillion with changed partners it would end.

Was the partnership between Stalin and Hitler a love match . . . or an opportunist fellowship between hostile gangsters? Was pan-Slavism the ally or the enemy of pan-Germanism? Would crafty Stalin succeed in stealing the German people from his confederate and spreading his brand of "neo-Communism" throughout Eastern and Central Europe, or would Hitler's disciplined battalions prove too much for

fumbling Russians and the affair end with the Nazis on top? Would Hitler, having crushed the Poles with Stalin's complicity, rub his divisions to shreds upon the West Wall and, failing, disappear so that Germany might return to civilization? Or would thwarted Germans, with their inherited instinct for suicidal strife, turn upon each other and tear their country to fragments? Or, on the other hand, would the disciplined weight of Hitler's armies prove too much for the democracies? And if so, would the Americans promptly go to their rescue or stand gaping at the spectacle until the victor turned and struck them in their turn?

None could say.

The writer's one certainty was that things would never be even similar to what they had been before. Germany under Adolf Hitler had put the clock back beyond predatory Prussia, beyond the medieval *Raub-ritter*, back clear to Attila, to the destroyer, the Scourge of God. Yet underneath the ruins and the horror, a better world was trying to be born.

Paris

September, 1939

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